Saturday, March 24, 2012 | 9 sections | Vol. 27 / No. 107 | P18 | Mobile Alerts | www.inquirer.net | Philippine Daily Inquirer DZIQ 918AM

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Japan ready to shoot down Nokor rocket; AFP on alert

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE PHILIPPINE military yesterday said it had "intensified" its monitoring of North Korea's plan to launch a long-range rocket next month, as Japan readied its missile defense systems to shoot down the rocket if it threatens Japanese territory.

The move by North Korea's new leadership has set off alarm bells across the region. The Philippines is calling for help from the United States to monitor the rocket, part of

JAPAN A11

Nokor rocket test a prelude to ICBM capability—US / A11

MISSILE THREAT (Far left) Two Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force's Aegis guided-missile destroyers, Kongo (front) and Chokai (rear) head out to sea from their base in Sasebo in this photo taken on March 26, 2009. Japan is readying its missile defense systems to shoot down a North Korean rocket if it threatens the country. At left, a rocket lifts off from its launch pad in Musudan-ri, North Korea, in this April 5, 1999 image from KBT video.

'Atienza's testimony opens door to Basas'

Prosecution may call CJ's in-laws as witnesses

By Gil C. Cabacungan and TJ Burgonio

THE PROSECUTION yesterday left open the possibility of calling two in-laws of Chief Justice Renato Corona as witnesses to rebut defense claims in his impeachment trial.

"No firm decision yet about rebuttal," Aurora Rep. Juan Edgardo Angara, a spokesperson for the prosecution, said in a text message. "We will wait for the completion of the defense presentation but we are looking at it as an option."

Angara was referring to Atty. Flory Bass and her niece, Ana Bass, who have been involved in a squabble with Corona's wife Cristina—also a niece of the man—over the controversial sale of

AFRAID? A11

Recto, Cuenco tangle over P54.7M check, other cash deposits / A16

ROYAL VISITOR GRATEFUL President Aquino guides Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah before tracing the line during the arrival honors at the Malacañang grounds on Friday. The Kuwaiti ruler is on the country on a five-day state visit. He thanks the Filipinos for their help in liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. (Story on Page A14)

Power crisis confirmed in Mindanao

By Norman Bordadora

MORE electricity is being used in Mindanao than what the power distribution firms have contracted to buy from power generators.

This was the crux of the energy problem in Mindanao, according to President Aquino who presided at a meeting with energy officials on the acute power shortage in Mindanao which has been suffering recurring power brownouts from two to four hours a day.

POWER A17

P-Noy: There's power surplusin Luzon / A17

PH techies create app, win big in FB tilt

By Paola G. Honrado

PHOBI "best capital" to "social media capital of the world." That's how the Philippines would henceforth be known.

Pinoy-in-Your-Filipino programmers who bagged a major prize at the recent Facebook hackathon held in Singapore.

Beating other programmers from several Asian countries, Aaron Sia, Mike Lynnes, Melvin Fabiano and Josh Sasuta, programmers are king for home-grown

PH TECHIES A10

Whitney: Death by drowning, cocaine

LOS ANGELES—Grammy-winning pop legend Whitney Houston died from accidental drowning in her hotel bathtub after taking cocaine which could have triggered a heart attack, coroners said on Thursday.

The disclosure ended weeks of speculation about what killed the singer-actress on Feb. 11, a day before the 54th annual Grammy Awards, the music industry's biggest awards show, and

WHITNEY A10

Defense fears Coronas would be ridiculed if they testify

By TJ Burgonio

CITING fears that their clients might be subjected to intense grilling and public ridicule, the defense panel yesterday said it might not call Chief Justice Renato Corona and his wife Cristina to the witness stand, after all.

Defense lawyers Tranquil Salvador III and Rico Paolo Quicho said that Corona and his wife Cristina, who have already been "strapped in public" by the impeachment trial, would rather risk a potential public backlash than be subjected to intense grilling and ridicule at the Senate impeachment court.

The defense's latest move came amid calls yesterday by leaders of a Je-

DEFENSE A16

Lawmakers take Lenten break in S'pore to study casino trends

By Gil C. Cabacungan

BARELY a day after Congress shut down for the customary Lenten break, almost a dozen members of the House of Representatives hurriedly packed their bags and rushed to Singapore for the weekend, ostensibly to attend a casino briefing and a meeting of regional parliamentarians.

Manila Rep. Amado Bagatsing confirmed via text message yesterday that he and four other lawmakers were in Singapore to attend a briefing to be conducted by UBS Bank and the Resorts World Investors Group on gaming and tourism trends and business opportunities in the region.

LAWMAKERS A18

WORLD
US Army sgt. to be charged with 17 counts in Afghan murders / A23

NEWS
Feuding Villafuertes still at it in Senate hearing / A15

NEWS
Flagship of US 7th Fleet here on 'goodwill mission' / A2

BUSINESS
'Philippines most underrated in the world' / B1

SAT. SPECIAL
Dustin Hoffman makes directing debut at 74 / F4

WEATHER FORECAST

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Kalayaan/Pagasa	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Masbate	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cuyo	Partly cloudy
Ilocos	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Subic Bay	Partly cloudy	Dipolog	Partly cloudy
Aparri	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly cloudy	Davao	Partly cloudy
Legaspi	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy
Catarman	Partly cloudy	Iligan	Partly cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

Mobile Alert: Text INQ [space] [your message] to 2366 | E-mail: pi_mail@inquirer.com.ph | Fax: 896-2222

Today's GAB LUCKY 13/

PCSO 6/42 LOTTO
8 24 21 13 24 2
6/55 LOTTO
3 7 4 5 2 5
4D/3D RUSH
6 4 1 4 3 3 2
MEGA LOTTO 6/45
5 6 16 17 25 40
P22,099,950.00
LOTTO: 7AM/1PM LOTTO, result to 4PM. PCSO.gov.ph

13 Finance execs ordered sacked

By Kristine L. Alave

THIRTEEN OFFICIALS and employees of the Department of Finance were ordered dismissed by the Office of the Ombudsman yesterday after it found them guilty of defrauding the government of P82 million in staging the so-called tax-credit scam in the 1990s.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales found guilty of grave misconduct former Assistant Undersecretary and One-Stop Shop Inter-Agency Tax Credit and Duty Drawback Center Director Cielo C. Magno; Administrative Officer Nelson Sebastian; Former Deputy Administrator Hilarion Ambisyon Jr.; reviewers Rowena Mahusay and Asuncion Mayshan; evaluators Gemma Ortiz-Mateo, Arabella Hilo, Emelita Tiron, Petra Sapanta, Charmelle Reyero, Melvon Tombollin, Gregorio Estrella-Evangelio, Wash Misael, Cherry Gomez and Sylvina Dagatiol.

Morales said the 13 people should be dismissed from government service, with accessory penalties of cancellation of eligibility, forfeiture of retirement benefits and perpetual disqualification from reemployment in the government service.

The Ombudsman's decision stemmed from the complaint of Special Presidential Task Force 158 alleging anomalies in issuance of 119 tax-credit certificates (TCCs) to fumigated Multi-Cartons Millsline, (MCMI) by the BIR amounting to P82,319,235.

According to the Office of the Ombudsman, the TCCs issued by BMCMI and approved by the Finance officials were obtained using false documents.

The TCCs were also transferred to various corporations such as Wise & Co., Bush Boake Allen Phils., Filsyn Corporation, Hi-Lex Manufacturing Co., Calabarzon Spinning Mills, Pacific Mills Inc., Golden Dragon Textile Mills Inc., Hirst Unity Textile, Richwood Industries, Pacific Mills and Philpinas Shell Petroleum Corporation, the Ombudsman said.

In another decision, Morales also recommended the filing of graft charges against former officials of the Center for the Investment Incentives of TCCs amounting to P74.84 million.

Former DBC Head de Vera was ordered charged with violating malfeasance and corruption and erratic thread). These also included in the Ombudsman's indictment were former senior tax specialists Brenda Manuel, senior tax specialist Rowena Bada, tax specialists/evaluators Gregorio Cuenco-Evangelio, congressional Reynaldo Wash-Misael, reviewers Asuncion Magchat and Evaluator Petra Sapanta.

Also ordered charged with similar were private respondents Homeowners Lumbias (president of Liberty Transport Inc.), Joseph Calimoso, Ramon Bautista (president of R.A. Bautista Inc.), Candido Pecundangan (president of the Batangas Land Transport Company), Joselito Tengco (manager of Subway Transit Inc.), three counts each; Henry Tomada, (president of Lumbaghini Transit Inc.), Charlie Uy, Ida Uy Yu, Yu Chin Yong and Rosario Quitollo (all officers or incorporators of Nikko Textile Mills Inc.).

Morales said the respondents issued 30 TCCs amounting to P74.84 million using spurious documents. The credits were given to BERC, Subway Transit, Bathtiguet Bus Line, Liberty Transport, Lumbaghini Transit and Nikko Textile.

Abadilla 5 kin picket SC, DOJ

By Jaymee Reing

RELATIVES of the so-called Abadilla 5 picketed the Supreme Court and the Department of Justice yesterday to renew their call for the reexamination of the sentences of their loved ones, who were now in life in prison after being convicted of the 1996 murder of a police colonel.

Melanie de Jesus, Marilou Lumacang, Cherlie de Jesus, Hilda Fortunas and Lolita San Felipe distributed copies of their letter to President Aquino, dated March 23, asking for the reexamination of the sentences of the five prisoners, who, they maintained, were innocent of the killing of Col. Rolando Abadilla.

"Your Excellency," the relatives wrote the President, "give them back their freedom and let them live the remaining years of their life with us, their family and friends who have not abandoned them. After all the sufferings and pain that we have endured, please do not make us beg for that freedom. Listen to with our dignity, which no government could take from us. Give us justice."

The women wore black shirts and covered their heads with black veils as they carried large pictures of the prisoners, Joel de Jesus, Ramanos de Jesus, Cesar Fortunas, Lenato Lumacang, and Augusto Ramos.

Fr. Robert Reyes, spiritual adviser of the Abadilla 5 and their families, offered a short prayer. He said he hoped the President would free the five by Easter.

The Abadilla 5 have been in prison for 16 years. "It has been a long 16-story and just hope[it is about to end]," Reyes said [but it is not over yet]."

"All it takes is the President's signature," he said. "Just one signature, which won't even take three seconds, to save them four."

Marilou Lumacang, wife of Lenato Lumacang, noted that as early as September last year, the Board of Pardons and Parolees headed by Justice Secretary Leila de Lima recommended executive clemency for the early release of the life sentences of the five convicts in just 16 years, which they have already served.

Should the President approve the recommendation, the five would be immediately freed from the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City.

Marilou Lumacang said she wanted her husband to be with her, as he was suffering from a chronic kidney ailment. "My husband's life is ticking away. Set him free, Mr. President," she said.

Reyes said he disagreed with the President's stricter rules claimed Mr. Aquino said [was beyond] a second [chance] to portray him as a do-nothing leader.

"I don't agree with ruthless [who say] he is 'tuyong-tuyo'—there is no such word," Reyes said. "But if the President will rise to the Abadilla 5 issue, I'll agree with them."

USS Blue Ridge here, won't join Balikatan

By Tina G. Santos

THE USS Blue Ridge, the flagship of the United States 7th Fleet, which docked in Manila on Friday, will not join any military exercise.

"Our mission is solely goodwill," said USS Blue Ridge commanding officer Capt. Daniel Grimes during a press briefing held on the ship shortly after it anchored off Manila South Harbor for a routine port call and a four-day goodwill visit.

But military group Bayan Muna slammed the ship's visit, saying it was "part of the US' grand strategy to reinforce its military power in the region by using countries like the Philippines as an outpost."

"The Philippines and the United States enjoy a historic relationship and among the closest between our people. The US and the Philippines are closely together in a range of issues, including humanitarian projects, responding to disasters, conducting transnational threats. The partnership and alliance of our countries advance mutual benefits for our people," said Grimes.

No comment on Spratlys

But Grimes declined to comment on the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) dispute and on the increasing presence of US troops and vessels visiting the Philippines.

"I think I'm not the best person to answer that," he said and referred reporters to the US Embassy for answers regarding the issue.

"Again, I apologize, I may not be the best person to answer that," he said when asked if the USS Blue Ridge would accede should the Philippines request the assistance of the US in conducting patrol operations around its territories.

"My scope is the Blue Ridge, I maintain this ship and I take care of my crew," Grimes said, adding that they won't participate in the Balikatan, the joint training exercises of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the US Armed Forces which will be held next month.

"We're just happy to be here. This visit will be an opportunity for us to appreciate the Filipino culture, experience and enjoy the city's sights and sounds," he added.

On Thursday, Malacañang denied that the disputes with other countries over the West Philippine Sea was the reason for the increased US presence in the Philippines that was announced by President Aquino on Wednesday.

Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda never even acknowledged that the delay in the number of US troops and vessels visiting the country would contribute to the stability of the region and improve the Philippine military's capability to protect the country.

Not related

Lacierda said the increased US presence was not related to the territorial disputes with China and other claimants countries in the Spratlys and other potentially rich islands in the West Philippine Sea. But he said it would certainly contribute to stability in the area.

But according to Bayan Muna secretary general Renato Reyes, the port call of the USS Blue Ridge, bearing Gabe on a goodwill visit comes at a time when the US and the Philippine government are busy hammering out a deal that would bring more US troops in the country.

"Sure, Aquino says there won't be a return of '09 bases, but with more frequent port calls, more freedom war games, and 600 US troops stationed in Mindanao, it's as if the bases are back," Reyes said in a text message to Inquirer.

With 268 officers and 1,173 sailors on board, the 194-meter Blue Ridge, with a range of over 19,000 tons, has been in service since 1970.

'RH is everybody's game'

By Julie M. Aurelio

IT'S everybody's game. One group can't just claim about.

Saying either side have a say on the controversial reproductive health bill, merchants groups urged lawmakers to come to vote on the measure, which they consider long overdue.

The Interfaith Partnership for the Implementation of the RH Bill (IPIB) stressed in call for the passage and immediate implementation of the measure to "save the lives of thousands of women."

The group is committed to advancing the issues of family planning, reproductive health and population and development.

"This is the legacy that you, our leaders, will be remembered by the Filipino people for generations to come," the alliance said in a press conference yesterday.

Taking a swipe at the Catholic Church which is strongly opposed to the bill, Marilou Lacsamana of the Quezz Pages Network said the Church hierarchy is "not the only one entitled to religious indignation."

RAFI

RAMON ABOITIZ FOUNDATION INC

5th RAFI Triennial Awards

For EXEMPLARY INDIVIDUAL and OUTSTANDING INSTITUTION in the VISAYAS and MINDANAO

AWARDEE INDIVIDUAL

RENE V. VENDIOLA

FR. ANGELO R. BUENAVIDES

PROF. ESTRELLA A. CANTALLOPEZ

APOLINARIO O. LEYSON, SR.

FR. DENNIS G. TAMAYO

AWARDEE INSTITUTION

Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation

Agri-Aqua Development Coalition-Mindanao

Alternative Indigenous Development Foundation, Inc.

SOS Children's Villages Philippines

The Great Physician Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc.

Nomination for the 6th RAFI Triennial Awards is now open.
To know more, please contact (032) 418-7234 loc. 105
or visit www.rafi.org.ph or www.facebookcom/rafi.org.ph

Girl Scouts say no to violence vs women, children

THE WORLD Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) is taking actions to help end violence against women and children.

Violence against women is one of the most widespread violations of human rights around the world, the Girl Scouts of the Philippines said in press statement. The GSP is a member of WAGGGS.

The statement said the United Nations estimated that up to six out of 10 girls and women globally have experienced violence and several areas in their lifetime. Hence, the WAGGGS created the campaign "Stop the Violence. Speak Out for Girl Rights." the GSP said.

The GSP runs the campaign in the Philippines. On February 11, the GSP held a symposium, "Violence Against Women and Children," in the Rita Magdalo Lim Auditorium in GSP National Headquarters in Manila. More than 400 Girl Scouts from Northern, Central and Southern Luzon discussed possible solutions and debates that girls and young women ought to recommending to their leaders and schools and how to stop them.

Dr. Bella Velez, wife of Mayor Vitaliano Villafuerte, noted, was the guest speaker. She discussed issues on gender inequality and other forms of violence against women and children around the world and how the girl scouting movement would help to stop them.

"Boys and girls," Velez said, "should grow up with healthy relationships since violence never solves a issue. girls to stand (violence) on your himself, while a woman becomes submissive to violence when she's not confident enough to say no."

POSTHUMOUS AWARD. Julio de Borromeo, the widow of the late Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, receives the Posthumous Recognition for Outstanding Service for the late ambassador and Leyte governor from Philippine Constitution Association Manuel M. Lazaro during the PHILCONSA month-long meeting at the Manila Hotel. Also in the photo are Romualdez's son, Leyte Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and wife Yolita Maria and retired Chief Justice Reynato Puno (part b. bibble).

Philconsa honors Kokoy with posthumous award

THE PHILIPPINE Constitution Association (Philconsa) paid tribute earlier this week to the late ambassador Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez for his contributions to the development of the country's foreign relations.

Romualdez's wife, Juliete Gomez-Romualdez, and her children—Philip, Marcos and Ma. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez—accepted the posthumous award in ceremonies held at the Manila Hotel.

Also present were Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta, Romualdez' fiancee, Bernadette Sembrano, former ambassadors to China, United States and Saudi Arabia.

Philconsa's president, emeritus, retired chief justice Reynato Puno, and chairman and CEO Manuel Lazaro presented the citation to the Romualdez family during the organization's monthly member-fellowship meeting.

Philconsa was founded in September 1961 as a nonstock and nonpolitical association to defend, preserve and protect the Constitution. It has since become one of the most prestigious organizations in the country.

Kissinger-like

Philconsa honored Romualdez "for his long and outstanding service to his country and to people as public servant, diplomat, local government official and philanthropist; for his dedication to serve as ambassador to the People's Republic of China, the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." It cited him "for his Kissinger-like boldness, innovation, and vision in the field of diplomacy resulting in enhanced linkage and greater respect the Philippines enjoy abroad."

Without lechery

Many of those who had worked with Romualdez said he "operated smoothly without much fanfare," unlike the former first lady.

Philconsa also lauded Romualdez's role in the expansion of ties between the Philippines and Saudi Arabia, which led to stable oil supplies for the country and to the signing of a peace agreement with Muslim separatists.

The organization also cited Romualdez for his accomplishments as governor of Leyte from 1967 to 1986, among them the development of the San Juanico Bridge, the government center in Tacloban City, the first economic zone in Eastern Visayas, a geothermal power plant in Tongonan, rural mass roads, bridges and irrigation projects that made life better for not only the people of Leyte but also of the people of Eastern Visayas.

Philconsa recognized Romualdez's philanthropic work as chairman emeritus of the Benjamin Tiu-Abad Romualdez Memorial Foundation and founder of the Dr. Vicente Orestes Romualdez Educational Foundation, which supported 8,000 scholars.

From your proud Alma matter

CONGRATULATIONS

New UNCean Lawyers!!!

Hazel V. Abugot
Oliva C. Arce
Sheena Ester P. Arteta
Lloyd Czar B. Ballesteros
Julie Ann B. Barrion
Florante L. Belleza, Jr.
Feladel R. Ceneta
Suzette S. Dacillo
Zhalaika P. Daud
Florante N. Encisa
Adolf M. Gigantoca
Leo Archival I. Imperial
Ma. Asuncion R. Llaguno
Ginalyn R. Marcaida
Aristeo P. Mariscal
Lheila Mozenda C. Mendoza
Joel F. Paladan
Maria Pacita M. Rasara-Necesario
Doreen Ann C. Savilla
Jessie Rainer F. Savilla
Donna Federico-Madrosa
Andy G. Rivero

UNIVERSITY OF NUEVA CACERES
JAIME HERN MODEL, FOUNDER
CITY OF NAGA

You are invited to a Testimonial Dinner
on March 30, 2012 at 7pm at the La Plaza Ballroom,
Avenue Plaza Hotel, Naga City

Enrollment for SY 2012-2013 ongoing.
call 811-6188 Loc. 118

3 women busted for drug pushing

By DJ Yap

PASIG CITY: Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) agents arrested three women in separate buy-bust operations in Zamboanga City and Barangay City early this week.

PDEA Director Police Senior Supt. Director Gelacio Jr. Gutierrez identified the suspects as Kerissa Castillo, 42, and Rose Ann Lovalino, 24, both residents of Zamboanga City; and Nora Asuncion of Barangay City.

Agents from the PDEA Regional Office 9 (PDEA RO9) under Director Adelina Asilum-Gihan arrested Castillo in an entrapment operation in Barangay Upper Calarian after she sold a plastic sachet of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) to an undercover agent.

A body search on Castillo yielded drug paraphernalia and a cellular phone allegedly used in drug transactions, the PDEA said.

Another entrapment operation conducted by PDEA RO9 in the same barangay resulted in the arrest of Lovalino in her residence after she sold a plastic sachet of shabu to an agent who posed as a buyer. Lovalino also yielded drug paraphernalia.

The PDEA said being illegal drug changes against Castillo and Lovalino.

In Barangay City, agents from PDEA RO13 under Director Joel Plaza arrested Asuncion in a buy-bust operation on Dacera Street, Barangay Tagkilatan, after she sold two plastic sachets of shabu to an agent.

Confiscated from Asuncion were a cellular phone allegedly used for drug transactions, a pair of scissors, and the money from the sale, the PDEA said.

Asuncion is detained at the PDEA RO13 office, facing illegal drug charges.

Visit your Eastwood sales office
Join us for a Special Open House at Block 36, then
starting 2 PM, at the Eastwood Grand Showroom
beside the Eastwood Mall in Eastwood City

Discover the story of your life.

ONE EASTWOOD AVENUE

Adventure. Romance. Indulgence. Delight. Inspiration.
No matter what your life story may be, One Eastwood Avenue lets you experience each day with a renewed passion. And lets you discover all its possibilities with a sense of exhilaration. Now, you can do it all at home. Amp up your adrenaline. Get close to the one you love. Feel pampered any time of the day. Celebrate small moments. And go after big dreams. And just when life can't seem to get any better, have the entire Eastwood City at your door—and a world of endless pleasures to explore.

Everything you love to live for is right here. **One Eastwood Avenue**

Anything and everything is possible in the newest address that has it all.

- A luxury enclave in the most prestigious location in Eastwood City
- Your choice of well-designed studios and one- to two-bedroom condos
- Modern façade features an LED video wall and landscaped eco-wall
- Seventh-level and roof deck commence over 3D high-tech play amenities such as a life-sized jam with stylish views, a 30-meter lap pool and two outdoor badminton courts that convert into mega function areas
- Fifth sky gardens at the 16th, 20th and 38th floors
- A few steps away from the country's first 7-cylon cars, the Eastwood Mall and City Walk 1 and 2
- A community shuttle offers rides around Eastwood City while the City Link Bus services routes to Marikina Hill in Taguig City and Newport City in Pasay City

UNITS FOR AS LOW AS **P10,000** A MONTH

Eastwood City
LIVE THE LIFE YOU LOVE

Developer:

MEGAWORLD

Tels: (632) 421-4243 · 421-4247
www.eastwood-properties.com

MEGAWORLD 2011 MM-0001

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Environmentalists warn of toxic river

Trekking ban on Kanlaon lifted

BACOLOD CITY—Trekkers can now include Mt. Kanlaon National Park (MKNP) as their destination this Holy Week.

The Office of the Park Superintendent of MKNP has lifted the temporary ban on mountaineering activities in the area after its rangers removing trails had been declared passable and safe for trekkers.

Water sources at the crater were also sanitized while the rock protective law were established at the rim of the volcano crater said Park Superintendent Ceril Calinda.

Trekkers were banned from the park after smoke were monitored following the 4.9-magnitude earthquake that rocked Cadiz and Negros islands on Feb. 6.

But after assessments in late February, Calinda lifted the ban. Carla S. Gamos, Jr., quince Visayas

DAVAO CITY—Rising levels of nitrate and phosphate in a river that drains into one of the city's major sources of drinking water are prompting environmentalists to raise health concerns here.

It was immediately addressed, the high levels of nitrate and phosphate could degrade water quality at Sasaan River, said Jerry Dino, health problems in water consumers here, said one of the environmental groups, Barnes away, a Bagobo term for water guardian.

Atan Giempaw of Kaanay Aang said a river area monitoring they conducted on the water in Panigan River, an important catchment basin for the city aquifer, showed that its nitrate level has gone up to 2.33 mg/L figures per liter, higher than the allowable 1 mg per liter for tap quality source while phosphate level was at 0.12 mg per liter, which is higher than the 0.1 mg per liter for tap quality water category.

Under the standards used by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the level of nitrate in Panigan River placed its water quality in the Class C category while its phosphate content placed it under the DMW Class B category, which means water cannot be "economical purposes only."

Environ said their study showed that except for the rising nitrate and phosphate levels, the river's other temperature, dissolved oxygen content and water acidity were still within the safe limits for water organisms in water.

But Giempaw said the situation could worsen if the contaminants were not addressed from its source.

"The river is still clean and has enough oxygen to support fishes but we are concerned about the levels of phosphate and nitrate in the water," said Giempaw.

Ann Fuentes, environment research specialist for Interphase Development Initiative, said the high level of phosphate and nitrate found in the river could have come from pesticides and fertilizers.

Giempaw said measuring plantations and small farms dotted the river.

Calinda said the solution to the rising levels of nitrate and phosphate is to implement the city's watershed code, which banned single-crop plantations and farms from the watershed sources to periphery.

City Agriculturist Leonardo Avila admitted that the code, approved in 2008, has yet to be fully enforced. Bernadine Lacorte, Inquirer Mindanao

AGUSAN WHITE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Board Power Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AWEC) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) is inviting all interested suppliers, manufacturers, distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following:

Item No. and Description	Material Specifications	Estimated Value of Procurement	Bid Price
[illegible]	[illegible]	P 10,000.00	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
Total ABC			[illegible]

The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination (PCDO) shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Prequalification, bidding, evaluation, post qualification (as applicable), and award of contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184, its Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Venue	Date	Time
Issuance of the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and Bid	BAC Secretariat, AWEC Main Office	Mar. 22, 2012	8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Documents	BAC Secretariat, AWEC Main Office	Last day to submit eligibility documents	5:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Pre-Bid Conference	Training Room, AWEC Main Office	May 2, 2012	10:00 AM
Submission and Opening of Eligibility documents and Bidding Proper	Training Room, AWEC Main Office	May 9, 2012	10:00 AM

Bid Documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat Office of the GM, AWEC, Buyo, Bingawa, Santa Rosa. For additional information and queries please contact Rene Ann, (077) 744-7222, (077) 409-5208 or (077) 750-2190 or email: [illegible]@awec.com.ph. Interested parties may send their Letter of Intent to the BAC Chairman on or before the deadline.

The AWEC hereby reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive this bidding process at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder and without obligation to inform the affected bidder of the grounds for such action. However any waiver, defects and irregularities thereto shall be evaluated such that as may be considered vital consideration to the transaction.

(Sgd.) ROSENDO B. AGUANI
BAC Chairman

Noted by:
(Sgd.) ATTORNEY A. GALINATO, PEE
General Manager
(PB – March 24, 2012)

Veggie demand slump due to glut, say farmers

THERE it is: dull day at the La Trinidad vegetable trading post in Benguet, a wholesale market where vegetables grown in Benguet are traded.

BAGUIO CITY—Truckers who ship Mister Manilos daily vegetable supply from Benguet have been spending P1,000 more on gasoline due to the rise of kerosene in pump price since January, but this was not the reason for the vegetable demand slump that hits, a farmer group said on Friday.

Agot Cariño, executive director of farmer's rights group, Samson D.O.T.Sant, denied television news reports aired during the nationwide transport strike on March 23, which celebrated poor vegetables sales at the La Trinidad vegetable trading post in the high-land province.

The reporters quoted traders who claimed that high gasoline prices have been discouraging truckers from shipping Benguet vegetables to the livelihoods center in Manila.

Trade Undersecretary Jonathan Mendoza said vegetable prices in Metro Manila never changed when news about the supposed impact of high fuel costs on vegetable demand were aired.

Mendoza was here on Friday to verify reports concerning the drop in vegetable demand to local cards.

Balanoy informed her that trucks, which ferry vegetables from farms in Baguio town to the La Trinidad trading post, used to spend P4,500 on fuel but have since increased their expenses to P5,000.

She said buyers from Divisoria spend from 100,000 to P1,000 for their trucks' fuel, but have since been spending from P10,000 to P12,000.

However, the average income of trucks hauling sliced vegetables, like potatoes, cabbages and carrots, have not changed significantly before and after the latest fuel increase this month, Balanoy said.

Her group's monitoring chart showed that 181 vegetable trucks loaded for Divisoria left the trading post between March 5 and 11, a period marked by farmers D.O.T.Sant as days "before fuel increase."

In a section marked "after fuel increase," the chart showed that 275 trucks loaded the same items left the trading post from March 19 to 22.

Before the fuel increase, 116 trucks bound for the vegetable wholesale market in Balintawak, Quezon City, and other Metro Manila markets left the trading post, while 159 trucks bound for other Luzon provinces bought vegetables in La Trinidad from March 5 to 11, the group said.

After the fuel increase, 118 trucks bound for Balintawak and 267 trucks bound for other Luzon provinces transported Benguet vegetables from March 19 to 22, it said.

The most recorded price hike took place on March 22, the day the government approved a provisional 50-centavo increase in kerosene taxes in most parts of the country.

Balanoy said overnight stay incurred for the late demand of trucking from rural areas.

"The farmers were trying to avoid the low prices of potatoes that affected their profits in 2011, so many stored them pending materials until the time that everyone planted potatoes anyway, which explains the glut," she told Inquirer.

Balanoy said the summer rains also spoiled the farmers' cabbage harvests, which could have disrupted supplies.

Given this information, Mendoza said the Department of Trade and Industry would extend investigations the vegetable supply chain because Metro Manila consumers still pay double for Benguet vegetables.

Balanoy said farmers are still hoping for traders, who buy their produce at a lower price and then sell them at a higher price to make up for several hours of payoff they make as they deliver their produce to Metro Manila. VINAIR Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Ahead. WHERE WE PLACE YOU.

The ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS (AGSB) is a premier business and management educational institution committed to the Jesuit tradition of academic excellence and service. By enhancing management theory with real-world practices in our programs, we develop business practitioners into strategic and effective managers. By enriching management skills with values in our programs, we nurture business practitioners into professional and ethical business leaders committed to nation building.

Application for admission of new students for the 1st Trimester, School Year 2012 - 2013 for the following degree programs is now going on:

- MBA STANDARD PROGRAM: A 24 to 30-month training program for young professionals to become senior managers and leaders in the future.
- ATENEO-RHUH ACCELERATED MBA PROGRAM: A flexible and accelerated 18-month program for employed managers learning to become future CEOs and senior executives.
- MIDDLE MANAGER MBA PROGRAM: A focused 20-month program for employed managers learning to become future CEOs and senior executives.
- MBA IN HEALTH PROGRAM: A 24-month program for professionals and leaders in the health sector.

Online admission is also accepted. Please visit http://gsb.ateneo.edu and click online admission and fill out the application form. For more details email ateneo@mail.gsb.ateneo.edu or 9218447.gsb.ateneo.edu

SCHEDULE OF ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS: 8:00 a.m., Sat., April 14, & May 5, 2012

Ahead. WHERE LEADERS PLACE THEMSELVES.

ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

AGSB Professional Schools Building
Rockwell Drive, Rockwell Center, City of Makati, Philippines
Office Hours: 9am to 6pm
Tel.: (632) 890-7801 / 810-8100 (632) 728-2601 / 728-2602 Fax: (632) 890-1545
Website: http://gsb.ateneo.edu

2 drown in Sorsogon amid rains

LEGAZPI CITY—Two people died in separate drowning incidents on Wednesday and Thursday in Sorsogon amid heavy rains in Bicol, the Office of Civil Defense in Bicol said Friday.

Bernardo Alejandro, Bicol OCD director, identified the victims as Jayne Gordido, 16, of Barangay Ubason in Bulan town, and Abel Penina, 61, of Barangay San Francisco in Bulusan town.

Alejandro said Gordido was swimming with her friends in Sitio Ilog in Barangay Ubason around 3:30 p.m. Wednesday at Sabang Beach when he suffered muscle cramps and was carried away by strong sea currents and drowned.

The coast search and rescue team recovered Gordido's body and brought it to the Bonifacio Archabon Memorial Hospital in the town on the same day but was pronounced dead on arrival by attending physicians.

Penina drowned while trying to save a flooded spillway in Dalit village at 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, said Alejandro.

Penina also suffered a landslide at Barangay G. del Pilar in Bulan on Thursday leaving to a mudflow a house owned by a village councilman, Alejandro said.

No casualty was reported, he said.

A low pressure area between east of Puerto Princesa City in Palawan brought low to moderate rainfall to Albay and Sorsogon over the past two days, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration. Rhoi Arguelles, Inquirer Southern Luzon

School probes pupil's death

COTABATO CITY—The Catholic-run Notre Dame University (NDU) has started investigating the death of a female 6-pupil, who was attending rehearsals for the upcoming graduation ceremonies.

"We are still investigating," said Fr. Eduardo Tomaliwan, NDU president. A panel was formed early determining what caused the death of 12-year-old Wyl Alli Jalala.

Tomaliwan said the boy was among the students attending rehearsals for the graduation ceremonies and was seen literally moving heading to the school clinic.

Reports said the boy had complained of seizures. "The school nurse attended to him and helped the child lie down in one of the beds," he said.

Moments later, Tomaliwan said the boy vomited and wanted blue. "He was rushed to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival," he said.

There were reports that the boy choked while playing plastic balloon. The boy was buried under kinsite rites Tuesday in Magsaysaysan. Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

BPI Family Auto Loan makes Life in the Fast Lane EASY; presents 2012 Manila International Auto Show

David Sarmiento, Jr., SVP and Head of Auto Loans Division of BPI Family Savings Bank; TG Limcaoco, President of BPI Family Savings Bank; Joseph Ang, Chairman of Worldlink Services International; and Haroun Noor Alfarisiwa, VP and Head of Product Marketing of BPI Family Savings Bank discuss what to expect at the Philippines' biggest motoring event of the year, the 2012 Manila International Auto Show.

Joining SVP Head of Auto Loans, Mr. David Sarmiento (3rd from left); SVP and Chief Marketing Officer, Ms. Joji Ocampo (5th from left); and VP Herbert Tuason (3rd from right) at the 2011 BPI Family Auto Madness display at the MMA is Spartal Gucci premium driving World Record holder, Ross Stadt (in blue) and the BPI Family Auto Loan promo girls.

David Sarmiento, Jr., SVP and Head of Auto Loans Division of BPI Family Savings Bank; TG Limcaoco, President of BPI Family Savings Bank; Joseph Ang, Chairman of Worldlink Services International; and Haroun Noor Alfarisiwa, VP and Head of Product Marketing of BPI Family Savings Bank formally launch the 2012 Manila International Auto Show.

For the second straight year, BPI Family Auto Loan presents the 8th Manila International Auto Show (MIAS). BPI Family Auto Loan has come on board to make this year's theme, "Life in the Fast Lane", easy for Filipinos, especially for BPI and BPI Family Savings Bank clients.

Slated to run from March 29 to April 1, the MIAS remains the Philippines' biggest motoring event of the year. It features the best and latest in the local automotive industry—from the coolest sedans to the monstrous 4x4 pickup trucks, all exhibited at the World Trade Center Manila. MIAS brings the biggest brands, the latest car models, and the coolest car accessories under one roof.

As the official presenter of the MIAS, BPI Family Auto Loan makes the biggest motoring event in the country even more exciting by offering its pioneering FREE 1 Year Insurance with Acts of Nature coverage promo exclusive for BPI and BPI Family Savings Bank clients. Moreover, the BPI Family Auto Loan team will be on site to help make car ownership an easy reality through easy online application. BPI clients present at the auto show can also enjoy as low as 10% down payment and as fast as 3 hours approval.

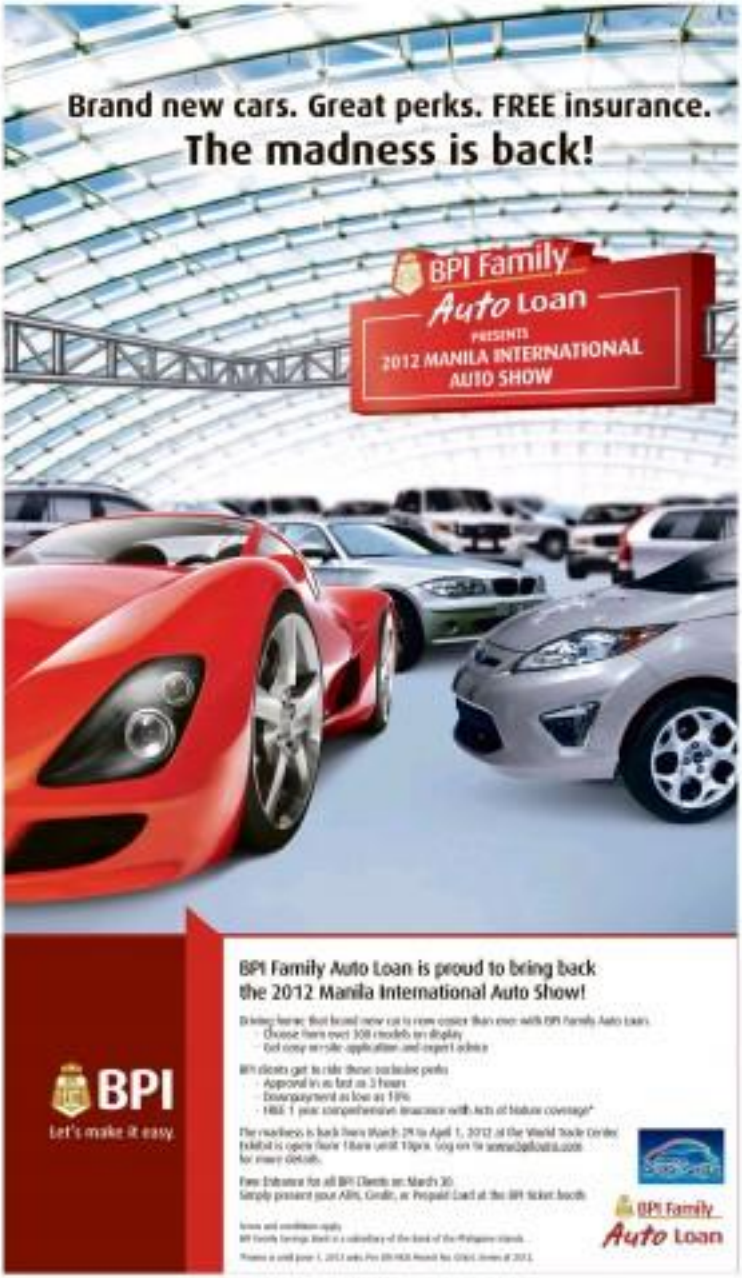
"We see the continued interest of Filipinos to have their own cars. Our partnership with Worldlink Services International for the 8th Manila International Auto Show is in line with our commitment to make car ownership easy for Filipinos. With BPI Family Savings Bank at the MIAS, we can help you decide which car suits you best and provide 1 Year comprehensive insurance with acts of nature coverage - FREE for one year," says Mr. David Sarmiento, Jr., SVP and Auto Loans Division Head. "This way, we also help Filipinos prepare for the unexpected and ensure that when typhoons, floods or other calamities hit, they are surely protected."

Aside from BPI Family Auto Loan affordable interest rates and free insurance, clients can also take advantage of a FREE BPI SmartCard with FREE fuel and fuel rebates given upon loan approval. Paying for your loan is also made more convenient because of BPI's wide range of payment channels such as auto debit arrangement, Express Online, Express Phones and ATM.

Mr. Sarmiento adds, "During the MIAS, we offer to the public deals that will give them the best value for their money that no other banks have offered before. We encourage car buyers to visit and join us at the 8th Manila International Auto Show to help them decide which brand new car to buy."

BPI Clients can get FREE entrance to the 2012 Manila International Auto Show on BPI Day on Friday, March 30, 2012. Just present your ATM, Credit Card, or Prepaid Cards at the venue.

The Free Insurance promo runs from February 1 to June 1, 2012. Clients may also visit H2 Pasay, the country's first luxury and concept store, at 802 Pasay de Roxas corner Nicava Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City or visit www.bpiloans.com or any of the over 800 BPI and BPI Family Savings Bank branches.



INQUIRER Visayas

Julius Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Connie E. Fernandez

'Read-along' kids learn Chinese culture

By Cris Evert B. Lim
Cebu City

EDITHA Adonis, 64, was giggling. She was asked to stand and say, "Ni hao" ("Hello" in Mandarin).

The grandmother explained that she only heard the word while watching "Mr Bucenda Ltd," a popular ABS-CBN soap about a Chinese girl who pretended to be taken to protect her father's election.

"I don't like the country way of saying it," she said, laughing.

Adonis brought her 5-year-old grandson Mhenry to a two-hour exposure on Chinese culture and language on Feb. 28 inside the compound of the Binaliw Center for Professional Development (BCPD) in Barangay Binaliw in Cebu City.

At least 30 parents and 30 pupils of the Barrio Luz Day Care Center were taught a few words in Mandarin and introduced to the world of tea, calligraphy, red envelopes and noodles.

The 30 pupils, mostly 4- to 5-year-olds, were treated to a host of bites, lumpia to dumplings, at noon.

While they were guided by BCPD students to show the exhibit, these pupils were taught Mandarin.

According to Adonis, she used to view Chinese-Filipino families as thrifty and business-minded people who lived comfortable lives.

"Most of them have businesses and they seem to have a lot of money. Almost everything here is owned by them," she added.

But after the exposure, Adonis said she understood why many Chinese succeed in business.

"I learned that they are very hard-working people. That is why they succeed in business," she said.

"The environment they put into their minds is clear even in the way they write. Every character here is complicated to me and I cannot imagine how they learn everything. Even the correct tones in saying the syllables are confusing. I'm happy to be enlightened," she added.

For a year-old Harry Clark Bernasor, she understood the meaning of red.

"It's red everywhere! Meaning we are all happy and lucky," he said when asked what he learned from the session.

The children were taught that red signifies luck as it invites wealth and success every end-of-year.

The Chinese Festival, along with the Read-Along session was held on Feb. 25, a long day and was organized by the BCPD and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Leading the event were 60 BCPD sophomores studying hotel and restaurant services, who had been exposed to Chinese language and culture since September 2011.

The BCPD is a 19-year old technical-vocational institution that offers opportunities for underprivileged young women to be employed in the tourism sector right after graduation. This is possible since the school has partnered with hotels and restaurants in Cebu.

Since 2005, it has been supported by Rotelec Australia Ltd., a nongovernmental organization that considers the school to develop the skills of students.

"Our industry partners noted that there is a growing number of Chinese tourists in the country. We want our students to be equipped with the basic knowledge of the culture of these tourists so we learn the culture," said Elizabeth Lopez, BCPD director.

"The session is difficult especially the language part because it needs to be practiced. But I personally like that we are oriented to the culture because it made us appreciate the Chinese tourists we meet in the workplace," said Reyjan Garrido, 18.

Caroline is currently undergoing an on-the-job training at Cebu City Marriott Hotel. She will graduate on March 31.

FUN: 5 of Barrio Luz Day Care Center are given an orientation about the red envelopes ("hongbao" in Mandarin Chinese), which are usually given to children and unmarried family members during Chinese New Year. CRIS EVERT B. LIM

Sino-inspired

The students read two Chinese-inspired stories to the children: "The Origin of the Zodiac Along the Chinese Calendar" and "How the Zodiac Signs Are Arranged in Each Element."

Apart from a front of Chinese food and language, the 30 children were given books and red envelopes with gold chocolate coin inside. Winners of the question-and-answer game were also given prizes.

Lopez said this was the first time for parents and grandparents like her to be exposed to Chinese culture.

"It was fun! It did not feel like a session class. We go home with full stomachs and mind. I learned while having fun," she said.

A bigger refuge for abused children

By Carla P. Gomez
Bacolod City

ABUSED children now have a bigger home in Bacolod City, where they can seek refuge and heal from their abusers.

The Haven Home's two-story Kalipay House has three big rooms with bathrooms that can accommodate at least 40 children, said Kalipay Negrense Foundation Inc. (KNFI) president Anna Bulcelo.

It also has a library classroom for children who cannot go to school, a common room for those suffering from trauma who become violent, a kitchen, a living room, an office for social workers, a chair and two rooms for volunteers who help take care of the children.

A well has also been built around the property to keep the children safe.

"The new Haven is a gift to the disadvantaged and abused children of Negros Occidental and Bacolod," Bulcelo said.

Hefty donation

The "gift" actually came from a Manila-based philanthropist, a friend of Bulcelo's, who decided to give a hefty donation upon hearing that the children's old home at Pamindenhe Subdivision in Bacolod had become run down and was being eaten by termites.

The old facility was purchased in 2007 with the help of another friend of Bulcelo's, Elizabeth Yu, a daughter of Tapian Henry Yu of the Oil Group of Companies. The property was also bought with Yu's donation.

The Haven House was originally founded in a rented house in Bacolod in early 2000. It was run by American social worker Phillip Bowden, 71, and his wife, Cecilia Garcia, a native of Negros Occidental, using their pension from the United States.

Permanent home

But the broker couple were running out of money to fund for the children.

Bulcelo then decided to gather her friends and put up the KNFI to help the feeders buy a permanent home for the children they were taking for. A two-story wooden house was bought in Pamindenhe Subdivision.

Kalipay was created to accept donations that were converted to for the Haven, Bulcelo said. It took over the management of Haven's House last year as the feeders were set to retire this month.

Another facility, the Reverend Teresanes' Kalipay House, was set up in Bago City, also in Negros Occidental, that's Haven and Reverend Teresanes are run by full-time house parents and staff.

In March last year, Bulcelo said she was talking to a friend, Miguel Braun, Kalipay's ambassador to Spain, about the need to raise funds to build a new house for Haven. Their conversation was overheard by her philanthropist friend.

"The next day she (philanthropist) came to me and said 'I want you to build that house.' And I said: 'But how I don't have the money,'" Bulcelo said.

Her philanthropist friend, who didn't want to be identified, told Bulcelo that she would give money to build a bigger facility. The old house was then torn down to give way to a bigger and better home.

While the facility was being constructed, the children stayed in a rented house on Lizares Avenue. They will move in to their new house on April 1.

Children in need

"My want to put motives out that if a child is being beaten up and hurt, we can take them in at Haven," Bulcelo said. If, over separate from the state, houses will be used by social workers to screen and care for children needing help.

"This new house is well thought out with the intention of being a refuge. We hear a lot of stories of children who are abused and don't know where to run to. Make and such help. We want to be that place for them," Bulcelo said.

At the same time, she is asking financial help so the KNFI can sustain at least the monthly needs of the house that cost about P150,000, which covers food, medicine, clothing and the education of the children.

Those interested in helping Kalipay may call 0917-7002245 or 709-1215, or e-mail kalipaynegrense@rocketmail.com.

THE HAVEN House has a bigger and better home for its 30 abandoned children, most of whom are abused. CARLA P. GOMEZ

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
10
MSc TIP
Master of Science Technopreneurship & Innovation
Make a meaningful difference to humanity through our Master's programme in entrepreneurship
Join us at the MSc TIP Information + Seminar Session
Information Session in Manila
Meet us and learn how you can embark on your own entrepreneurial journey!
27 March 2013, Tuesday (1pm to 10pm)
Nash Room, Mandarin Oriental, Makati Avenue, Makati City 1200, Metro Manila, Philippines.
RSVP AT: www.ntu.edu.sg/nto
Our Alumni
Nanyang Technopreneurship Center

Agro-Fair, street dancing highlight 143rd town rites

Simeon Toribio's feat still unmatched today in PH

Mayor Che Toribio: Her eyes on the prize

Brief history of Carmen

Toribio reports halfway mark accomplishments

MORE FUN IN CARMEN. Unlike Mount Carmiria, Toribio de los Reyes, there is more to Carmen than just the world-famous Chocolate Hills

Past Facts About Carmen

FROM Beauché INTERNATIONAL

Nokor rocket test a prelude to ICBM capability–US

SEOUL, South Korea—North Korea may have fits hands, but it hasn't performed ways to put one onto a missile that could strike faraway enemies, like the United States.

This is why Pyongyang's announcement that it will launch a satellite into a long-range rocket is met mostly is showing so much attention: Washington says North Korea uses these launches as cover for testing missile systems for nuclear weapons that would target Alaska and beyond.

Although North Korea isn't on the official agenda of next week's Nuclear Security Summit in the South Korean capital, here's a look at why the launch will be a major point of discussion when U.S President Barack Obama and other world leaders gather in Seoul.

History of tossing

North Korea has spent decades developing its rocket arsenal, large, long-range rocket.

Most recently's launch...are to happen around the April 15 anniversary of the birth of founder Kim Il-sung...would be the fourth of its kind since 1998, when Pyongyang sent a long-range rocket hurtling over Japan.

A 2006 test was considered a failure, but South Korea published attention shortly after with its first nuclear test blast. The UN Security Council later banned North Korea from any further nuclear or ballistic missile testing.

North Korea's third launch, in 2009, was considered a partial success, with two of the three stages pushing the rocket over the Pacific. The third stage failed, and, despite North Korea's claims of success, no satellite was put into orbit, the US North American Aerospace Defense Command said.

That test was condemned by the Security Council. Pyongyang protested that it was testing satellite technology for peaceful purposes. It subsequently abandoned six nuclear disarmament talks and, weeks later, carried out a second nuclear test.

Unha rocket

Experts and governments will scrutinize next month's launch of what the North's state media call an Unha-3 rocket, presumably the next version of the Unha-2 rocket used in the 2009 test.

Unha-3 represented a significant advancement over previous rockets, according to an analysis written by missile experts David Wright and Theodora Postol. It was roughly 30 meters long and may have been designed around newer missile components, the writers said.

Three month's rocket is set to fly from a new site on the North's west coast, according to Google and Google Earth satellite imagery posted by Tim Brown, an analyst for GlobalSecurity.org. The Tongchang-ri site is 56 km from the Chinese border city of Dandong, across the Yalu River from North Korea.

Positioned only 70 km from the North's main Yongbyon nuclear complex, it has better roads and facilities, and allows a southerly flight path that keeps the rocket from flying over other countries, according to Wright, technical researcher at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Greater range

The new rocket will probably have better boosters and engines—and might even succeed in putting a satellite into space if it contains one, said John Young Jones, a South Korean rocket scientist.

North Korea may have loaded the rocket's third stage with more fuel to increase capability, Wright and Postol email, part of improvements that "would transform its present range if that technology was used to build a long-range ballistic missile."

North Korea says the launch is meant to contribute to "international peace and cooperation in the field of space scientific research."

But because ballistic missiles and rockets to satellite launches "share the same bodies, engines, launch sites and other developmental processes, they are inherently linked," said Mark Fitzpatrick, an analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In Jan. Pyongyang can only deliver a nuclear bomb "by boat, by van or by airplane, not by missiles," said longtime Pentagon adviser Andrew Marshall.

After half a century of persistence, North Korea is thought to have a fairly unsophisticated arsenal.

Huge unit bomb

While it has enough plutonium for about eight nuclear bombs "one pile" bombs similar to what the US dropped on Nagasaki in 1945, Becker estimates, it doesn't yet appear to have the ability to make bombs small enough to put on a missile.

Miniaturized warheads would require more nuclear tests, and Becker warns that if North Korea breaks its nuclear test moratorium, "it will almost certainly be a test of a miniaturized design."

Governments and experts are worried that a new rocket launch will spur a chain of events that starts with a test, resulting in a breakdown of diplomacy, another nuclear test and soaring tensions, threats and bloodshed.

Same technology

The United States has warned that launch would jeopardize a diplomatic deal settled last month that would ship US food aid to the impoverished North in exchange for a moratorium on missile and nuclear tests, as well as a suspension of those tests at Yongbyon.

Becker says a launch "makes a mockery" of the US-North Korea nuclear deal.

"You use the same technology to long-range rockets that you do to long-range missiles," he said. "There's only different in what you put on top." AP

Japan ready to shoot down Nokor rocket

From page A1

which is expected to splash down just 100 kilometers east of northern Philippines.

A special adviser to US President Barack Obama said North Korea would face a "strong response" if it launched its new rocket despite international calls to desist.

"If they go ahead anyway, we will want to work with our allies and partners for a strong response," Cory Emmert, senior national coordinator at the National Security Council, told South Korea's Yonhap news agency in an interview.

In Singapore, visiting United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned Pyongyang's launch of the rocket could jeopardize food aid to that impoverished country.

Help from US

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) gave no word on preparations if war taking in the event debris from the new North Korean rocket lands on Philippine territory.

"We have intensified our monitoring efforts of any significant developments. We will coordinate with our US counterparts and if necessary seek their assistance in collecting and analyzing the debris, if any," AFP spokesperson Col. Romulo Burgos Jr. said.

"We are still hoping that the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) will heed the warnings and appeals to stop their planned rocket launch which several nations have voiced out," Burgos said.

The North's planned launch sometime between April 12 and 16 will be a key topic on the sidelines of a nuclear security summit in Seoul starting on Monday to be attended by Obama and other world leaders, including the presidents of China and Russia. The summit will focus on nuclear terrorism.

Japan preparations

Obama has scheduled talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak and other leaders at the summit.

The nuclear-armed North has announced it will launch the rocket to put a satellite into orbit, a move that the United States and other nations see as a pretext for a long-range missile test banned by the UN.

The North's atomic program is expected to be the subject of intense discussion at the summit.

"I have ordered officials to prepare to deploy the PAC-3 and Aegis warships," Japan's Defense Minister Naoki Tanaka told reporters, referring to surface-to-air missiles and destroyers carrying missiles.

"We are talking to relevant local governments about the deployment," he said.

Second stage

The authorities in an interception would reportedly be deployed on Japan's southern Okinawa island chain, but any order to shoot down the North Korean rocket would first need the approval of Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda.

Japanese officials have said the projectile may pass over Okinawa.

In a notice to the UN's International Maritime Organization, North Korea has said the first stage of the rocket will fall in international waters between China and South Korea. The second stage is expected to splash down east of northern Philippines.

Ban, who plans to raise the rocket launch at the Seoul summit, said any launch could discourage international aid donors and worsen North Korea's already dire humanitarian situation.

"Such an act would undermine recent positive diplomatic progress and, in addition on international donors, would likely worsen the humanitarian situation inside the country," he said in a speech in Singapore.

'Clear violation'

North Korea has warned that any attempts to raise the rocket launch at the incident summit in Seoul would be taken as "a declaration of war" and rejected South Korean demands to call off the launch.

But Ban, a South Korean, said the launch would be a "clear violation" of UN Security Council resolutions and warned that the North already has a "serious humanitarian crisis" on its hands.

The United States raised doubt last week over whether it would provide food aid to Pyongyang if it followed through on the launch, after an apparent breakthrough deal with North Korea last month.

Washington had said it would deliver 240,000 metric tons of food aid to North Korea, which remains hampered by food shortages after a devastating famine in the 1990s.

In return, Pyongyang agreed to a partial freeze on its nuclear program, to suspend missile tests and to allow the return of UN atomic inspectors.

UN resolution

The Japanese defense ministry, who met with US ambassador John Roos late Thursday said the two sides "reconfirmed to further strengthen Japan-US cooperation, especially on the Korean issue."

In 2009, Japan ordered similar missile defense preparations before Pyongyang's last long-range rocket launch, which brought UN Security Council condemnation and tightened sanctions against the isolated communist state.

Then, as now, North Korea said was also aimed at putting a satellite into orbit, passed over Japanese territory without incident or any attempt to shoot it down.

A UN Security Council resolution passed after the North staged missile and nuclear tests in 2009 bans a ballistic missile launch for any purpose.

"An incendiary protest of the United Nations, I express my deep concern by the announcement of the [North Korean] government test their intention to launch a satellite," Ban said in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday.

'Declaration of war'

In Seoul, South Korean Foreign Ministry Kim Sung-hwan again appealed to the North to scrap its rocket launch, calling it "a grave provocation."

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak also warned Pyongyang that any aggression by Seoul's forces of force nations will discuss ways to press North Korea to abandon its plans to launch the rocket.

The United States, China, South Korea, Japan and Russia have been involved since 2003 in the talks, which have been broken off repeatedly over various inclusions of North Korean brinkmanship.

North Korea's state news agency said on Wednesday any attempt by Lee to raise the issue would be "a ridiculous attempt and an absolutely reprehensible criminal act."

Any provocative act would be considered a declaration of war by the North and its spokesperson would serve as great obstacles to talks on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula," it said. With reports from AFP and AP

THIS FILE photo shows a Japanese Self-Defense Forces Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) interceptor missile member deployed at a base in Ichiya in northern Japan. —AP

PH techies create app, win big in Facebook tilt

From page A1

technology firm Globe.com, won the "Best Mobile Web" Facebook Open Graph award for creating "Viber Me," an application that lets users post audio notes on their Facebook home page.

The term Symphony was coined by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Featured in the Academy Award-winning film "The Social Network," Symphony are Facebook's main recruitment method for finding talented programmers to work for the internet giant.

At the award's dedication in Singapore, developer teams were judged in consultation, meta programs and present the finished application within a short period of time.

"I don't think we were because of what we came up with in four hours, but because of what these Filipinos become in the hands of other Facebook users and the developer community," said Globe's chief mobile Web officer Jeffrey Hu.

'Phone app

"They can surely build on it [and] not only if it launch very engaging content think tapping tools and 'pick up line' bubbles. This can how bring these experiences to social media," Hutchens said.

The four-file application was developed as an offline application or "app" that would allow users to record voice greetings and post them on their own or on other users' Facebook pages. Other users can then listen to the recording, "like" it, and even share it with their "friends."

The app was created using Facebook's Open Graph application programming interface (API), which enables developers to create apps that take advantage of Facebook's social ecosystem.

Web, mobile integration

The team from Globe.com—now a subsidiary of Ismet Communications—was able to create their file in just four hours and without the need to use expensive SMS (Subscriber Value Responses) and VoIP (Voice Over IP) systems.

Technologies used is popular Internet communications software such as Skype and Yahoo! Messenger.

In a statement, Globe.com founder Dennis Mendoza said: "It seems like only yesterday when we were called the 'text capital of the world.' Today, it's still documented how we are the 'social media capital.' It's only the world hands in regard innovation in this area from Singapore, we take to social media like fish to water."

Globe.com Singapore Globe Text Messenger, which allowed international users to send short messaging service (SMS) or "text" messages in mobile phone users, was the world's first commercially successful integration of web and mobile internet.

Mendoza said Filipino telecoms firms also invented the Cant-text more than air and paper to pave on change of load between mobiles, which is now adopted in major mobile markets all over the world. Globe.com currently manages web is also sponsored the status broadcasts to a base of mobile followers, a precursor to such popular social media apps as Twitter, he said.

Passion and pride

"It's in our blood. The Facebook Hackathon represents some of the best SEA (Southeast Asia) mobile applications developers. Beyond superb line, talent and creativity, there is passion and pride in what we do," Mendoza said.

Globe.com recently merged with Multipat Mobile Inc., also acquired by Ismet Communications, to form one of the largest web and mobile application developer in the region, available to mobile internet communities' demand for apps of high utility and high entertainment value.

"We're very happy with what the Ignite team accomplished in Singapore," Ismet spokesperson Ramon Isberto said in a press release. "This is very much in line with our push in innovating in the application space," he added.

"As you know, smartphones are now becoming more popular and all the users of this are internet applications," Isberto said, adding that Ismet Communications would build on Globe's success to create more developer activity in the Philippines. "So we can generate more innovations here in Ismet international markets for Filipino developers."

Lawmakers take Lenten break in Singapore to study casino operations

From page A1

Bonnie's Pitch Bottom is an integrated resort on the island of Bottom, off the southern coast of Singapore, that operates Singapore's two casinos, a Universal Studios theme park and Marina Life Park, which includes the world's largest oceanarium. It is a sister resort to Bottom World Manila, a casino-franchise operator.

The day was paid for our own tickets and hotel accommodations," said Bagatsing.

The trip of the Bagatsing group came less than two weeks after the House approved on third and final reading a bill that would decriminalize Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.'s (Pagcor) authority to grant gaming franchises, giving the power back to Congress.

A source had claimed that a large group of lawmakers had gone on a junket in the island nation right in the start of the congressional Lenten break from March 21 to May 7. The source claimed that the trip had been bankrolled by Resorts World Manila.

But Bingaman Jose, president of Travellers International Hotel Group, which runs RWM Manila, denied extending any favors or perks to the lawmakers.

Bagatsing, the chair of the House committee on games and amusements, stressed that RWM Manila merely assisted the lawmakers for the Singapore briefing.

"We are currently reviewing laws on gaming and also the constitution of integrated resorts in our area," he explained.

The congressmen said his party included Taclan Rep. Jesi Lapus and Negros Oriental Rep. George Arnaiz, who are both members of the committee on legislative franchises; San Jose Rep. Joseph Victor Ejercito, a member of the committee on games and amusements; and Cebu City Rep. Rachel del Mar, a member of the two committees mentioned.

Bagatsing did not say how long the group would be staying in Singapore.

House Secretary General Marilyn Barua-Yap also confirmed that Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. and an unspecified number of members from the House majority flew last Rome to Singapore to attend a meeting of the Asean Interparliamentary Assembly (Aipa), an organization composed of the parliaments of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

"The Speaker has confirmed his attendance as of Wednesday but he sometimes changes his mind when important matters arise," said Yap in a text message.

Inquirer Libre ed heads UST Artlets awardees

INQUIRER Libre editor in chief and Radyo Inquirer anchor Luis "Chito" de la Stga. leads 18 outstanding alumni of the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Arts and Letters to be honored in the 2nd UST AB Centennials Awards on March 28 at the Balinsasa Hall of the Club Filipino in San Juan.

De la Stga, a UST Communication Arts batch 1984 graduate, will be recognized for his outstanding media service.

The affair is organized by The University of Santo Tomas Arts and Letters Alumni Association (USTAAA).

Also to be held is the 2012 Artlets annual homecoming dubbed as "Alo in the Sky of C (Sine-Centennial, Climate Change, Constitutional Crisis)," approved by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, ABS-CBN, Inquirer Libre, GMA/Kamuning and dzIQ 990 AM.

The event starts with a Holy Mass at 5 p.m. to be celebrated by AB Regent Rev. Fr. Isauro M. Fernandez, OP. Dinner follows at 6 p.m. and program starts at 7 p.m.

Others to be honored are: Gen. Rodolfo "Dolo" M. Urtula (Political Science 1966) and lawyer Rolando M. Gonzalez (Liberal Arts 1962) for government service; Ismael A. Cleto+ (Institutions 1967) for advocacy; Gene T. Perez (Economics 79) for author-building; Flora Dag-Uz+ (Liberal Arts 1962) for teaching; Edwin H. Hernandez (Communication Arts 1987) for industry/management; Ma. Yolanda C. Cesario (LA 86) for public relations; Roland O. Cuyo+ (Journalism 2000) for broadcast journalism; Nestor E. Cuestro+ (Journalism 1979) for print journalism; Jean Armando "John" Viray+ (Journalism 1993), advertising/marketing; Asuncion Josefa Rosalina A. Asuncion-Mercado (Sociology 1964) for law/practice; Sr. Bernardita D. Ocampo, FSP (Economics 1979) for literature; Alfredo Rivalio Yap+ (Political Science) for Grand Aclaba (Double strike), Silaco; Brothers from Batch 67 —Glenn Cruz (architect), Noel (Communications Arts) and Michael (Economics) for Grand Baglas (Archie Eldridge); and Dylan Simon B. Abalos (Jus 2011) for Grand Bidit (Artlet Young Achiever).

Aga-Ahan Batch Presidents and Sierras Dino will host the event, with comedians Boy Abunda and other celebrities as guests. The reunion will also feature other [illegible] and golden (1962) celebrations.

USTAAA president Teddy S. Revilla and UST Rector Rolando de la Rosa OP. Faculty of Arts and Letters Dean Michael Anthony Bunoy, other university officials and past deans of the college have been invited to grace the occasion.

A special recognition, the Natanauging Galang at Pagkilalang, will be given to Dr. Armando F. de Jesus, USTAAA founding adviser. Edgar M. Morada, USTAAA immediate past president; Associate Professor Nestor Cuising-Peralta, UST AB Garcinopolo founder; and Anabelle S. Orbon, Garcinopolo Batch Committee 2010.

For more details, call 735-5101, 406-1611 loc. 9507, (02)-(0)6[illegible] or (0)9[illegible].

idec
Split Type Wall Mounted Aircon
1hp-P16,500
FREE INSTALLATION

From the Boardroom to the Fairway.
The E-Class.
E-Class
Mercedes-Benz
The best or nothing.
20% downpayment, 48 months at 0 interest, free chattel mortgage
Mercedes-Benz Alabang [illegible] Mercedes-Benz Global City [illegible] Mercedes-Benz Greenhills [illegible] www.mercedes-benz.com.ph

express SALE
Ahhh... the perks of summer for only ₱588!
Selling Period : March 20 to 24, 2012
Travel Period : April 15 to June 30, 2012
₱588
All LUZON destinations to or from MANILA
All VISAYAS destinations to or from MANILA*
All flights are priced one way from origin to destination or vice versa.
For the complete list of destinations, visit www.airphilexpress.com
*15 kilos free baggage allowance for flights to or from Caticlan
15 KG FREE
PLUS 2KG
airphil express
CONDITIONS: One way - Book and Buy - Exclusive of VAT, Applicable Aviation Security Fee & other surcharges Non-refundable - Fare conditions apply - Limited seats - Forfeited if not used on flight date shown. Per CAB Approved fare and conditions.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

By its very name

THE ANNUAL Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival doesn't happen until July, but this early, the event—a much-anticipated entry in the cultural calendar of many Filipinos hungry for thoughtful, quality local movies—has been lugging the newer, albeit not for very good reasons. In the past weeks, a nasty public fight has broken out between the festival organizing committee led by chair Lisa Ito-Guillen and movie-making head Raldeir Tan, and budding filmmaker Emerson Reyes. It was the disqualification of Reyes' movie from the competition that sparked the sort of words on social networks and the media, and inconclusively roused a number of well-known directors and film commentators to take his side.

"MM. 143," Reyes' planned movie, was disqualified because of his insistence on casting actors Allan Paule and Joy Viado to play the lead roles in the film. Guillen explained in a letter to the director that the committee deemed Paule and Viado "not suitable to the material." Tan, who, before becoming a Cinemalaya mover, was best known as the producer behind the now-inactive Seiko Films and its prolific output of soft-core movies, reported-ly warned the more comely actors Vivian Velez and Francine Prieto to handle Reyes' film.

That Reyes stood his ground on his casting choices and got booted out of a festival that proclaims itself a champion of independent filmmaking has struck many as odd and ultimately questionable. Local cinemaven—many of whom have long despaired of mainstream Pinoy cinema's penchant for vapid melodramas, stale comedies and derivative romantic flicks, and who have found renewed hope in Cinemalaya's growing track record in discovering new filmmaking talents with fresh, seductive takes on Filipino stories—probably were most surprised to know that Cinemalaya organizers have, in effect, extra power over how a first-time filmmaker could make his or her own movie.

This is a festival, after all, that claims a lofty, well-articulated mission: "In the spirit of independent expression, the Cinemalaya Awards seeks to discover, encourage and honor the cinematic works of Filipino filmmakers that boldly articulate and truly interpret the Filipino experience with fresh insight and artistic integrity." How, then, does this square with a director, awarded the much-sought-after P600,000 seed grant to jump-start his creative vision, being hamstrung in trying to accomplish that vision? And, worse, when he rebels in his guts, nurturing his hopes on the festival's boldly stated commitment to "independent expression" and "artistic integrity" getting punished for it with the ultimate censure—a scrubbing of the means to complete and exhibit his work?

The promised dust his casting preferences were only a suggestion, and intended largely to raise the movie's commercial prospects. But that rationale doesn't quite cut it. If they were merely suggestions, then it was Reyes' prerogative to accept them or not. But his defiance has now cost him a berth in the festival. Clearly, the recommendations were a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. Also, to inquire the requirement of box office saturation on a Cinemalaya movie seems to run against the very grain of what the festival is about—that its films need not pander to the commercial and conventional, that they be free to tell their stories honestly and engagingly without having to reduce themselves to the usual cineplex commodity.

Commercial gain is the true gauntlet of the rest of mainstream Pinoy cinema, and Cinemalaya is supposed to be different. See it?

Writing online, director Erik Matti has raised other troubling issues, including the organizing committee chair's purported cornering of the market "for all the publishing of the Cinemalaya entries." Said Matti: "It's like city mayors bidding for road construction projects and awarding it to their own construction companies. Shameful!"

Inquirer columnist Nestor Torre has come out in Cinemalaya's defense, saying that "its reward speaks for itself." Quite right. But precisely for that reason—for its increasingly irreplaceable legacy in the form of such cinematic gems as "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," "Ing," "Engkwentro," or "Ang Sayaw ng Dalawang Kalibong Puti"—what a tragedy it would be if Cinemalaya's compromised itself, toyed with its avowed bedrock of principle and integrity, and turned its back on the very name it carries.

EDITORIAL

Founding Chair Eugenio D. Apostol

Publisher Isaac Tanny
Editor in Chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Managing Editor Joe Ma. D. Nolasco
Opinion Editor Rolando S. Gastilo and
Associate Editor for Online Inquirer.net Jullian D. Alcantara
News Editor Michael P. Esmenda Jr. • Chief, Page One Operations Mae R. Paloma
Chief, Page One Makeup Ramon G. Bautista
Assistant Editor Philippine Daily Inquirer, Jr.
Senior Desk Editor Juan F. Sarmiento Jr.
Editorial Consultant Antonio Zumel
Art & Design Director Lynet A. Valdez

Board Chair Hans E. Pantz
President Alexander Pantz-Romualdez
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Sharon E. Pantz
Vice President for Advertising Felix R. Olmedo
Vice President for Operations Jose D. Sarao
Vice President for Finance Jose D. Palabrica
Director for Human Resources Dorothy Andrea B. Sarmiento
Corporate Affairs Manager Cesar B. Salazar

All rights reserved. No part of this material may be copied or distributed without the permission of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Unauthorized use may be prosecuted under the law. Violators may be liable for damages and imprisonment of up to five years.

Decisive turn

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

Over-pumping of three aquifers allowed seawater to seep in "more than four kilometers inland," noted the Inquirer (8/10/11). "This contamination stretched inconsistently the city's main source of water. Who will answer for this crime?"

Of 116 cities, Cebu is the most water-stressed. The province has only 2 percent fresh cover left. Its population, industries and trade quadrupled the demand for water in less than half a century.

In mid-1998, the sustainable capacity of aquifers in Cebu City was exceeded 3.6 times and in Mandaue, 7.4 times, an Asia Land study found. If no reforms are adopted, Cebu's groundwater will turn undrinkable. "It will no longer be a question of supply but include the politically volatile issue of quality."

In 2007, water demand continued to pull away from supply. Cherry Ann Lim notes in "Voice of Water," "it's common to do so, but in areas experiencing peace. Philippinistic are double what small countries exchange."

For decades, the stark alternatives to cope with hunger on underground wells were: (a) tend coal types of aquifers à la Yemen and Babylonia-Akkad; or (b) draw surface water from outside Metro Cebu.

Mayor Tomas Osmeña's three terms offered a window of opportunity to start reversing the slide into disaster. He instead opted for denial. "What water shortage?" he'd dismiss warnings from Asian Development Bank and Debt Consultancy to the Water Resources Center.

Osmeña's budget multiplying wells by semi-pumping already-depleted aquifers. He signaled ecological policy insolvency last year by hiring a water diviner. Tada Cheong 'n 300 percent accurate," he told Cebu Daily News. But voodoo didn't resolve a crisis which he insisted didn't exist.

Regulators, industries and consumers shrewd

Metro Cebu's leaders, 40 kilometers north and south. They evoke visions Cebu City's kingpin proclamations to be "first among equals," or primus inter pares.

"History is a relentless master," John F. Kennedy said. "It has no present, only the past rushing into the future. To try to hold fast to the past is to no longer scale."

"We suffered the trapped into similar inaction," Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia warned after she signed her province's first ever surface bulk water agreement with Manila Water Consortium's Gerardo Ablaza.

In this "Private Public Partnership" project, Capitol will source where its muscle is. It plunked down P60 out of every P100 for the project; the Ayala-led firm put in P40. But potable water will already be pumped into reservoir that the pipeline reaches.

Taps will be fully opened late next year. From there, through 640 km. (3,140 perverse shortfall in Cebu water supplies.

An advance, non-recurred P20 million, will be given to Carmen town led by Mayor Martin Jay Jeff Villarosa. He has safeguarded watersheds and water use prudently...so that "Will he draw down and overtaxed the windfall to conserve this resource into the future?" Sun Star asked. "Maintain that vacant and 'Villarosa' will power among Cebu's leaders day after tomorrow."

Today's project started more than five and dug raised, in 1975, by Germany the Republic of the Philippines Economic Cooperation Agreement. It entered in July 2011, a year before the launch of Cebu's project. Prophets often yield to those who build on their vision.

Governor Garcia and the Ayala group started what seems a decisive turn away from following supplies by the easiest routes. It is a good beginning. "But a moment is not a destination," Arnold Toynbee cautions. "And a voyage is not a harbor."

E-mail: juan_mercado777@yahoo.com

Magic tricks and contortions

GET REAL

Sol'ta Collar-Monsod

Supreme Court on loans swelled in Sept. 7 transition. Not on the basis of any appeal as with filed by PAL but because PAL counsel Estelito Mendoza wrote four letters ...not even addressed to the high court or any of its members, but merely to the clerk of court. And rightly so, because the questions were in effect administrative in nature—the competence of the Supreme Court's chairman in the case, whether the case might have been transferred from one division to another.

Busay filed an MR, claiming among others that not only had there been no formal appeal by PAL, but it was also not even asked by the high court to give its comments—as the Members in one before it modern recall decision.

But forward to the March 2012 7-2 decision of the high court "In the Letters of Atty Estelito Mendoza re ..." The instructive line of this decision is that Busay is now back to square one, because the high court en banc is now taking jurisdiction of the case and would now be studying not only PAL's second MR but also its first MR, which questioned the original 2008 decision.

In other words, it is a complete victory for PAL, without its even having formally asked for it, and it exempts client Busay, the 1,800 illegally retrenched Busay members. Because as sure as my name is Winnie, the high court en banc will, in due time, rule that way.

How did it arrive at that conclusion? Here are examples of the magic tricks and contortions:

Magic trick No. 1 is a disappearing memo: When the high court en banc last sat Oct. 4, 2011, with Mendoza's letter on the agenda, Chief Justice Corona did not mention that the clerk of court had written a memo which declined Mendoza's claims of administrative bias per se in the assignment and raffling of the cases. Which was why there was no dissent from the justices when Corona said that the question involved a matter of the logic. I memo(s) until they could be mailed, and particularly because Brion, the possessor of the wandering, made excuses not.

Magic trick No. 2: The majority decision listed all the errors made by the raffle committee (all positive) and the clerk of court in the assignments of the case, thus supporting Mendoza's contentions and ignoring the clerk of court's memo. But it concluded that no fault could be attributed to the clerk of court or to any of the justices. Administrative bias per galore, but no one at fault.

Jurists, to whom the case was raffled after the Oct. 4 result resolution, found absolutely nothing wrong in the assignments of the case—in other words, the Mendoza questions were without basis, and there should have been no MR. Busay's decision had been shown the memo of the clerk of court.

Now the contortions: No. 1, really major was transforming the administrative mistakes into a jurisdictional issue, in order to lay the basis for the high court en banc taking over jurisdiction. And to ensure that it would not be remanded again. The point is that whether PAL's MR was assigned to the first, second or third division becomes irrelevant and immaterial against administrative parties.

Contortion No. 2 is the concept of a "nominal" possessor, who presumably has the authority to admit an MR, but cannot rule on it, as opposed to a "ruling" possessor, who has the authority to write the decision on its merits. Shades of philosophists that is not physicists—a possessor who is not a possessor.

But the biggest contortionist—the king of all flip-flops—has to be Brion, who was the possessor of the Sept. 7, 2011, resolution that gave the "final" victory to Busay, and also the possessor of the recent decision that took it away from Busay and gave it to PAL instead. Unbelievable.

Undeserved unhappiness

THERE HAVE been reports of happiness in many countries for some time. 2001 did its first national happiness survey in 1991, and repeated it in 1996, 2000, and at least once a year from 2006 to 2011.

I used to be laborious about such surveys. In the first place, cross-country happiness contests don't interest me. More respectfully, increasing happiness, unlike reducing poverty, is not an official objective in the Philippines (or anywhere else, except in Bhutan).

More, however, I fear that the social relevance of happiness surveys is that they also tell us about unhappiness. In the current survey, the unhappy are 16 points ahead of the happy (meaning that 8 in 25 are unhappy). Tempting heads of undeserved unhappiness by means of surveys adds to the ordinary by including hunger and poverty.

The standard survey question on happiness is: "If you consider your life in general these days, have been happy or unhappy/neutral/you can't say/you are not the whole?" Are you Very Happy, Fairly Happy, Not Very Happy, or Not At All Happy?" (abbreviated here as VH, FH, NVH and HANH). In the 1991 poll, 1995 asked: "How happy or sorry are you being today as Filipinos?" in 4 options, reasonable for respondents to have a Filipino-centric view of happiness (Hindi Masyadong Masaya, o Malungkot Ako) Masaya?"

The most recent connection of unhappiness to hunger: When last surveyed by SWS in June 2011, the happiness numbers were: VH 11.5, FH 41.9, NVH 23.5, and HANH 22.1.

The 9.1 percent extremely unhappy is uncomfortably since it equals 1.7 million persons, when applied to a national base of 18.7 million adults. Adding the 23.5 percent NVH to the 9.1 percent HANH yields 32.6 percent "extremely unhappy," corresponding to 6.1 million persons.

In June 2011, SWS surveyed plain hunger, i.e., either moderate or severe hunger, at 22.1 percent of households, of which 2.9 percentage points were in severe hunger in particular. Let us compare the unhappiness of the plain hunger versus the non-hunger households. Of unhappiness at

Social Climate

Mahar Mangahas

the severely hungry versus the non-hungry, and (c) unhappiness of the severely hungry versus the plain hungry. The results of all three comparisons make sense.

For June 2011, in households without hunger, unhappiness (HANH not-experienced by only 15 percent of adults. In those with moderate versus hunger, HANH was felt by 31.1 percent, or five times that in non-hungry households. In those with severe hunger, HANH was felt by 42.5 percent, or 10 times that of the non-hungry—a comparison of—and double that of the plain hungry—comparison (c).

Let us then look at broad unhappiness. For June 2011, in households without hunger, broad unhappiness or NVH/HANH was experienced by 44.8 percent of adults. In those with moderate versus hunger, it was felt by 70.9 percent, or four times that in non-hungry households. In those with severe hunger in particular, it was felt by 87.3 percent, or 2.5 times that of the non-hungry, and significantly higher than that of the plain hungry.

Analysis of full data on unhappiness and hunger. SWS has just completed similar analyses for all its 16 national surveys of happiness that are so included hunger, over 2006-2011.

In that period, for me, in households without hunger, extreme unhappiness was felt by a median of only 2.7 percent. On the other hand, in households with moderate severe hunger, extreme unhappiness was felt by a median of 7.2 percent. Furthermore, in those still severe hunger in particular, it was felt by a median of 13.9 percent.

In 2006-2011, among households without hunger, broad unhappiness or NVH/HANH was felt by a median of 34.3 percent. However, in households suffering moderate severe hunger, broad unhappiness was felt by a median of 59.1 percent. Furthermore, in households suffering severe hunger in particular, broad unhappiness was felt by a median of 77.7 percent.

Thus the full dataset of 16 surveys, examined by medians, points to unhappiness as lowest among those without hunger, mid-level among those in plain hunger, and highest among those in severe hunger. This is generally true not only for the three comparisons—for extreme unhappiness (which one would expect to be extremely subtle) but also for the three comparisons of broad unhappiness. The more unhappiness associated with hunger is the undeserved unhappiness.

Similar comparisons are done for each survey with unhappiness and hunger data available, the 16 surveys about 48 possible comparisons. In three 100 comparisons, the expected excess of undeserved unhappiness occurs for times, or a validation rate of 87 percent.

Unhappiness and poverty. There are 19 SWS surveys run in 1991 and 13 in 2006-2011 for which one can check whether unhappiness among poor households (i.e. self-rated poor) is greater than among the non-poor.

In the entire dataset, extreme unhappiness or broad unhappiness among poor households (self-rated poor, compared to only 2/4 percent among the non-poor. Broad unhappiness or NVH/HANH has a median of 21.8 percent among the poor, compared to only 10.4 percent among the non-poor. In the 48 possible comparisons, the expected incidence of undeserved unhappiness occurs 35 times, or a validation rate of 73 percent.

Studying unhappiness, not happiness, does seem to help the least of our burdens.

• • •

Contact SWS at www.sws.org.ph or www.hungermeter.org.ph. Special solicitations are by Andrea Mae of SWS.

Disconnection notice

LATE, VERY recently, I have lived under a metaphorical rock.

It is with shame that I admit that I have not watched the news, international or otherwise, in months. I hardly read the papers anymore, not even the comics page. In fact, the first time I saw Gloria Steinem in couch hair-do (yes, what's not actually the first time I heard that she was not quite well), was on Facebook.

Young Blood

Gabriela Victoria A. Emboscado

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below.—Ed.

I'm not ignorant of anything of national concern, to that matter.

It is with shame that I admit all these things because it is not as if I do not have access to television or newspapers. I have cable and the Internet at home. I should be able to keep up with what is happening in the world around me, but for some reason I find it so difficult. There must be something wrong when you are oblivious to current events but can log in to Facebook with your eyes closed.

I was not raised to be like this. At home, my parents would impatiently wait for the evening news to start on a subscription every day. Can meals together were almost always spent with the table facing the TV set, which was always tuned to a news channel. In high school, we had arguments in which we would take a heavy circle and resort to it. Where I study now, either are commonplace and almost everyone has a strong opinion whenever issue is tackled and still this. I cannot justify my ignorance and indifference.

Not an isolated case

In spite of my upbringing and environment, how I am, glued to my computer, isolated myself from events in reality, I know that I am not the responsibility of the Facebook Generation. And I believe that I am not an isolated case. The existence is to the constant barrage of countless status updates, blog posts, and tweets published daily around the globe. Sometimes one there, on the World Wide Web, there are thousands, if not millions, of people like me who have all but unplugged heads mainly for a robust escape offered by technology.

Who would have thought it would come to this? The Internet, after all, is full of promise. It has made the world luckier and accessible. She got reach out across the oceans and text to the continents that he heard without setting a foot outside the bedroom. And just as easily, there on the flip side of the coin, we now have as well the very blogging platforms and social networking sites where we can write about anything and everything under the sun and broadcast them where the sun does not shine. In other words, the world is at our fingertips.

But the benefits of the age of Facebook can be like.

Here, we come in information contest as it is dominating an effort to keep up with the latest news. There is no point in doing so when we can look it up immediately the moment we need it for, say, a supplemental in school. Sometimes, that moment never comes. Or it does, we simply Google it, and, presto!, others in the glory in that? This we easily rationalize. It is not necessary to know what is in the news, just realizing that there is an internet benefit to us the greater than my material around anyone can post.

Second, it is no longer difficult to make connections, but it can also breed a false sense of companionship. Clicking "Confirm" on a friend request does not make you someone's friend in the real sense of the word. The mere existence of other people does not translate to more relationships. Such ties are too weak to be expected to hold strong when and if. You must be made and support wholehearted only given for a higher cause, however noble it may be. Because of social networking sites, we are widely being misled into thinking that "online" and "offline" are other people to a sufficient substitute for the real thing.

With a single click, it is easy to cut the world loose what is on your mind. And if the internet has backfired on you on those two points, you will be left with nothing of substance to talk about, with nobody who gives a damn. So rather than you, you people are forced to look at yourself and their daily routine: waking-up, taking a bath, eating breakfast, going to work or to school, and everything else. Perhaps you yourself have been guilty of this. (I know I have.) Which brings us to the third point, the final blow in intrusion. The right to express ourselves is threatened by notoriety.

Taking action

Before the Internet—before the widespread use of computers and cell phones—people carried on just fine. Activists of ages past were no less influential and passionate about their beliefs and what they stood for before as they are today if not even more. And they would have appeared to the boon that technology has bestowed upon the children of the 21st century. It is easier than ever to stay updated, to voice out one's opinions to the public, to find out what everyone else is thinking, and to launch a plan to cause significant change for the better, in short, to take action, which is what activism is all about. And it's easy enough to do from all the way in the comfort of one's own chair.

There are exceptions to the rule of apathy. Reto and Bam, I see pages dedicated to activism—from support for the RH Bill and protests against the budget cut to petitions to save the Cordova dolphins from getting slaughtered in Taiji, Japan. Some of the blog posts about issues that matter. And almost everyone has a Facebook status or video on YouTube. And in all this I see a spark of hope in our generation, of which I would, ever much like to be a part. It is a spark of interest that just might blaze into a wildfire that will consume all of us with the passion for change.

This semester, I spend something with my lecturer that I had to post my status on Facebook for my homepage to an online journal. I am now conscientiously making an effort to stay updated on events in my country and in the whole world as well before I log in to Facebook. Perhaps one day I will start writing in earnest to what is happening around me, and maybe when I write enough posts I will start to blog. Or maybe I will just stick to my status updates on Facebook. I do not know yet. But the homepage is a start. Before I attempt to make a change in the world, I will first make a change in myself.

Gabriela Victoria A. Emboscado, 19, is a freshman psychology student at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She graduated valedictorian at the Ateneo de Davao University Junior High School. This piece won first place in the Freshman Essay Writing Contest organized by the UP Diliman Council and the Alpha Sigma Fraternity, and sponsored by Smart Communications. The contest topic was "Activism in the Age of Facebook."

Celebrating women writers on women's month

IT IS dubbed as the "Shortlisted: The Literary Academy of a Feminist Activist Star" by St. Mary's John Manuscript, GSB was launched on March 6, International Women's Day. It celebrates the recognition of the women's role in the nation's history, aiming here to a lifetime commitment to justice, truth, social transformation and, not one to be overlooked, and living life "sharing with the playful consciousness of God."

The book that grew from her studies books, "Women, Religion, and Spirituality in Asia," here is raised, personal tales that stakes for interesting reading. Sister Mary John, who is winding up her second term as mother provost of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of the Manila Priory, mentions this would not be too-long and heavily annotated academic work. Rather, it is a collection of 11 true writers in session of conversations Sabbaticals during long hours of waiting in airports all over the world.

Reading up are the childhood anecdotes from Mary John on tattoo—growing up in Bacolod-ng, Negros, and how she met unexpectedly—a young nurse led in authentic face, experimenting with smoking different cigarette brands and getting accustomed to the practice, and hiding the rationalization of St. Scholastica's College because, following untold could friend Kathy's advice, she rushed through the interview, and was accepted. The more spacious, and natural name of Provost in the school ruling. Yes, the same college of which she would be president years later.

As a young Benedictine sent to study Theology in Münster, Germany, after a tumultuous crash course in the German language, she met a young nurse led herself: "If I had needed an enzyme to learn German, why was I only being given two months?" She was to meet Karl Rahner, the most famous and revered theologian of the 20th century who was advised to the Second Vatican Council and wrote brilliant books in German that she wants to read. It left a condemned because of the depth of ideas and his rapped fragmented sentences.

She developed a close friendship with Rahner practically learning at his feet, though using conversation was not the main mode. In one of their informal conversations, he tantingly suggested that a real self would not be better than the black one she was wearing. What she treasures most from the autographed books Rahner had given her is a quote from their exchange of letters: "If I were to dogs, I would not be your pilot."

Years after Rahner's death in 1984, she realized that many of the ideas she was espousing and existentially she was making were not totally hers, but shaped by this giant of a theologian, her mentor.

Returning to Manila in 1973, a year after the declaration of martial law, Sister Mary John was immediately ordained into the parliament of the streets after responding to a call from fellow religious for support of the 24 Bandala workers who were on strike. The involvement with strikes, making workers rights as a member of the oppressed. It was inevitable that the focus on political injustice and injustice would lead to denouncing the often unspoken domestic violence—and the contradiction to the empowerment of women.

The story of Sister Mary John inspires women of all ages and walks of life to see themselves as a religious and as a woman leader. Just what being her own TV talk show, "Nun more Maker Issues"—but also because she could listen to gems that "genuine spirituality transcends denominations and dualisms." So, it is possible to remain loving bread of the feminist organization Lilia without being a religious.

Commentary

Neni Sta. Romana Cruz

Another woman author to celebrate is a recent Manila native, London-based Candy Gunther, a former life & life journalist and acclaimed author for her young adult novel, "Till Then," published by the Singapore-based publishing David Publishing Books, and Locke Publishing for the Philippine edition. The story incorporates elements of the heroine de Cupin Silk tale into a modern fiction story that begins at the Bradbeen airport. "So many angels, so little discernment ...."

After a few years of writing novels, Gunther finally realized the wisdom of a literary agent's counsel. ("Write what you know. Write about the Philippine experience.")

Her book was on the Times of London summer reading list, selected one of 100 best books in the UK Times. "Till Then" and "Love at the Top" are the first in a trilogy of books for Harper. Her latest songs "Till Then" was one of the top bestsellers of Waterstone in a recent poll of the large Bibliothek-chain, even outselling "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" and—gasp—even Bridget Jones.

In the United States, children's book author and Rutgers University doctoral student Lois Ingalsag will feature an hour-wide 2005 memory interviews comic strips that humanize child poverty, which reveal the nature of the child in that era. The event is scheduled at noon on March 29 at the Ayala Museum, on Pasay Highway.

Ingalsag is the author of such children's books as "There's a Dinosaur in My Brother's Soup," "Cri Eyes," "Hiro" trilogy, "A Cow Upon Heaven-ening," and a collection of poems, "Children of Two Seasons."

Cebuana Filipina—surrounded through these titles which look over readers of all ages in March at the counter ahead!

• • •

Neni Sta. Romana Cruz (neni.cruz@gmail.com) is chief of the National Book Development Board, a trustee of the Philippine Children's Museum and a member of the Lopez Museum Foundation.

Geared toward faster growth

I AM most bullish that the government is forecasting a GDP growth of 6 to 7 percent for 2012. This year will see the beginning of a surge in investments by both the public and private sectors. Investment confidence is at an all-time high, as shown in a recent survey conducted by the Makati Business Club. The good numbers has fueled a movement from the "pantheon by analysts" to "pantheon of 2011."

A 7-percent growth is no longer new to the Philippine economy. In 2007, the year before the subprime crisis exploded, our GDP grew by 7.1 percent. In 2010, with the global economy still gripped by the financial crisis, Philippine GDP grew by 7.6 percent. I have no doubt that despite the expected slowdown in Europe, the United States and Japan, the Philippines will manage an average of 7 percent or more for the coming 5 to 10 years, replicating the experiences of India in the early 1990s and China in the early 1980s. Like these two countries in their own times, we are reaching our "tipping point" in 2012.

What seems to be a sudden, revolutionary and dramatic transformation is in fact the result of at least a quarter of a century process of slow and painstaking reforms—political, financial, market, social and governance reforms—that began in 1986 after the ouster of the authoritarian Marcos regime. Unlike in still existing authoritarian regimes, as China and Vietnam, where reforms can be initiated from the throne of the emperor, the democracy we created under the presidency of Cory Aquino took years to the description given by Winston Churchill: "Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." It has taken over 25 years for the country to reach a critical mass of reforms that can now make it possible

Business Matters

Bernardo M. Villegas

for the economy to register sustained growth of 7 to 10 percent in its GDP. The rate of growth necessary to make a dent on the intractable problem of mass poverty, in which some 30 to 40 percent of the population live in deplorable living conditions. The last 2010 census surveyed that in which objective observers like the IBRC conservatively estimate to be around 30 percent, or the historical rate of 5 to 4 percent. The perception of those who have become bullish about the Philippine economic situation is that in the first full year of the administration of President Benigno Aquino III, the Philippine economy has finally unshackled itself from the kind of policies that will enable it to start growing at 7 percent or more over the next 30 years.

Over the last 26 years under various presidencies, there have been a series of step-by-step reforms: restoration of democratic institutions under Cory Aquino; anti-dictatorship and liberalization under Fidel Ramos; intensified focus on rural and agricultural development under the short-lived administration of Joseph Estrada; and massive investments in infrastructure under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. These reforms built on top of one another created the last ingredient for reaching the tipping point: good governance. The elected President aspires in coordinating the final ingredient. He is showing the political will to fight graft and corruption at all costs. This explains the more optimistic view of the Philippine economy among both local and foreign investors.

The more positive perception about the Philippines by credible foreign business investors was obvious to those of us who recently conducted a non-deal investment road show in the key US cities (Washington, New York and San Francisco). I traveled with a team of presidential representatives from the investment promotion agencies of the government and met with several members of US and other potential investors. The sessions were literally standing room only (SRO). In fact, because of strict building code regulations in the United States about room capacities, some interested parties had to be turned away. We clearly realized that the Philippines is finally on the radar screen of investors from all over the world, especially in such sectors as agribusiness, infrastructure, energy, mining, tourism, logistics, health care, IT-enabled services and high-value manufacturing.

The investment bankers are not expressed the opinion that before 2012 is over, the Philippines will get a credit rating of investment grade, following closely the footsteps of Indonesia. It is not a coincidence that it was the aggressive campaign of our economic team led by the late Jesse Robredo of the administration of President Benigno Simeon Aquino III that changed the general negative perception on Indonesia. It is the unwavering political will of President Aquino to capture corruption in the Philippines that has enabled the country to reach the tipping point and propel itself to greater heights.

• • •

Dr. Bernardo M. Villegas is senior vice president of the University of Asia and the Pacific. He is a multi-millionaire investment banker and economist.

Most Filipinos still interested in outcome of Corona's trial

LETTERS

I WONDER how Amando Doronila reached the conclusion that public "interest in the (Corona) trial has waned after eight weeks, with many people suppose-dly tired, hungover and yearning to eat relax in the relevancies of the trial—which has assumed the passion of the political dose—as the daily litter of sensation-ous tone and the press" (The less dreaded?" In your, 3/20/12).

In fact not, Filipinos are very much interested in the outcome of the trial, as shown by the latest Pulse Asia survey where 47 percent of the respondents said Chief Justice Renato Corona is guilty, 3 percent found him innocent, while 43 percent said they are undecided. Add up all these figures and you get 93 percent, meaning, only 7 percent do not have any opinion at all or totally not interested in the trial. Doronila's conclusion is therefore pure speculation and not grounded in reality.

I do not believe Doronila's contention that the Aquino administration is too focused on the trial and ignoring other corrupt officials of the previous administration, nor, can it be too neglected the economy and misplaced government resources in the midterm election campaign.

The labeled Bank report that Doronila cited is very clear: Presidential Appointees must have managed to put in place strong economic fundamentals in the past one-and-a-half years, and part of the reason for this is that the government is committed to good governance.

I don't see either what Doronila described as "dissipation of government resources and efforts in the administration campaign." All the government departments and agencies are doing their assigned jobs. It is the Supreme Court that has seemingly stopped all work and done nothing except receive ballots in support of their beleaguered Chief Justice.

If Pinoy has made fighting corruption the top priority of his administration, it is because this is the key to poverty reduction. Without a serious anti-corruption campaign, the government's many resources will only go to the pockets of the corrupt instead of serving the poorest of the poor. By voting over to corruption, which drives almost a fourth of the annual national budget to private pockets, Pinoy has shown that he is determined to reduce the ranks of the poor, and not merely to ease the likes of Cardinal Sin and Senator Cayetano, the face of brazen corruption in the country, go scot-free to continue stealing from the national coffers again and again.

—ALAN GRAVA,
alan_grava@hotmail.ph

Penchant for misusing the trappings of power

KUDOS, JAMAICA DAVID would not have drawn a darker characterization of impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona's persona than in her March 16 column where she asked: What has broken Ronda would have sounded like Eleven Pinoy Beau in cross-over to the opera to meet Corona and his wife Cristina?

The "appearance" heaped on the Baron by the Corona duo allegedly bear well-written by others, but I think David drew a more complete picture of "Corona's Pinoy actor" when she cited Corona's "penchant" to take advantage of the trappings of power, like getting special treatment to complete his documents in stroll less from the Governor's of Santo Roman.

I think a more recent incident which should give us pause then doesn't really something fatally flawed with Corona was the reported use by his witness Demetrio Demetria of a Supreme Court van as a service vehicle.

To me this is the height of arrogance on Corona's part. He is already accused of so many improprieties and is at last in the middle of his trial in the Senate, yet here he comes again being caught with another shenanigan.

Who told Corona that he can use the resources of the Supreme Court to suit his own ends, or conjugated money to hunt his witness—not to mention his own family? Where's the respect for institutions Corona? Corona of the legality, decidedly or propriety of using government assets?

In short a need as well Corona that the ban on the filing of the documents of assets, liabilities and net worth mandates that he report the acquisition costs of his properties, along with their assessed and fair market values?

In the end Justice, Corona stands at the vanguard of ensuring the truthfulness of the SALNs of all court officials and employees, yet his own SALNs were riddled with undervalued assets, ill net undervalued assets, and unreported bank deposits—a contrast had they not been brought out into the open by the House of Representatives.

—JACEF GARCIA,
garcia.jacef@yahoo.com

HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION
Office of the President

INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS FOR NEGOTIATED SALE

The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) is inviting interested buyers to submit proposals for purchase the property described below thru outright sale, pure and/or agreement (JVA):

Project Name	Location	Property Description
PUB Aviation	Roxas Avenue, Pasay City, and Building 4 Sta. Sto. Pasay Avenue, National City	a. Approximately 10 lots with a total area of 1,000,000 sq.m. or thereabouts; and b. 10,000 meters across the entire front of the PUB Building's Roxas Avenue; and c. permitted for development as an ELEVATED CULTURAL MIXED PROJECT

1. The disposition of the PUB Aviation shall be on an "AS IS, WHERE IS" basis.
2. For outright sale proposals, terms of payment may be in cash or installment; and
3. For JVA, the proposed terms and conditions of the JVA must be indicated.
4. All interested buyers must meet the Eligibility Requirements (ER) of HGC.
5. The proponents shall specifically indicate the proposed development or business line of the property.
6. Details pertaining to the PUB Aviation as well as the guidelines for the negotiated sale can be obtained from the HGC Asset Management Department (AMD) Office located at the 4th Floor, Joaki Building, 333 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00.
7. The JVA Land Development Proposals shall be made and prepared on the assignment map and boundary line data of Roxas.

8. Schedule of activities:

Activities	Dates / Time
a. Issuance of Notice/Documents Containing Terms & Conditions of Sale and Property Profile	March 26, 2012 to April 11, 2012
b. Pre-Negotiation Conference	April 12, 2012 (Thursday, 11:00 a.m.)
c. Deadline for submission and opening of ER and Financial Proposals	May 3, 2012 (Thursday, 1:00 p.m.)

9. All interested buyers are advised to thank the Bids to them and acknowledge and the condition and status of the property.

For inquiries, please call (632) 8818-9511 to 19 extension or call (632) 8818-9511 to 19 extension or call (632) 8818-9511 to 19 extension or

Ailing Ampatuan Sr. out of hospital, back in jail

By Jaime H. Aurelio

MAGUINDANAO massacre suspect Andal Ampatuan Sr. is back in jail after a Quezon City court ordered his discharge from southern hospital where he was confined for two weeks.

The 79-year-old former Maguindanao governor was brought back to Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City from the AFP Medical Center yesterday on orders of Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes of Regional Trial Court Branch 221.

Upon his discharge from the military hospital, Ampatuan was brought to the Philippine Heart Center for a cardiovascular exam and CT scan.

According to Bureau of Jail Management and Penology director Ricardo Diel, Ampatuan will be moving to a clinic at the Quezon City Jail Annex (QCJA) building in Camp Bagong Diwa where he will undergo observation for the next five days.

He will be eventually brought back to his detention cell on the building's fourth floor, the jail official said.

In its order, the court noted that an examination of Ampatuan's medical records show that he is considered unfit to the extension at the military hospital. His medical condition has, in fact, improved since he was first brought to the hospital on March 9.

"The court notes that there is no longer a need for the accused to be transferred to the Philippine Heart Center as his medical condition has apparently been adequately taken care of," the court said.

Ampatuan was released from the QCJA for two weeks after he reported blood and had difficulty breathing.

He was first rushed to the Taguig-Pateros District Hospital on March 9 before being transferred to AFP Medical Center.

Ampatuan's lawyers had asked the court to let him be confined at the Philippine Heart Center, as he was suffering from pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and anemia brain and heart attacks.

A Philippine General Hospital (PGH) doctor who checked on Ampatuan said his pulmonary state was not critical and he can be discharged from the mechanical ventilator that assisted him in breathing.

This prompted the prosecution to ask the court to deny Ampatuan's urgent motions for continued confinement, citing the improvement in his health.

In the order, the court denied Ampatuan's pleadings after the defense lawyers said they will not contest the PGH doctor's findings and recommendations for their client to undergo a CT scan.

Villafuertes square off at Senate CamSur hearing

By Tj Burgonio

CAMARINES Sur Gov. Luis Raymund "Lray" Villafuerte Jr. openly tangled with his father, Committee Rep. Luis Villafuerte Jr., at a Senate hearing on Thursday on the proposed breakup of the province to create a new one, Nueva Caceres.

But the Commission on Elections (Comelec) virtually doused cold water on the strangling of the Villafuertes when it declared that it had no funds for the conduct of any plebiscite this year, and was projecting the succeeding one of the 2013 elections.

Proponents and opponents of House Bill No. 4920 seeking the creation of the province of Nueva Camarines presented their positions at the hearing by the committee on local government, constitutional amendments and electoral reforms.

VILLAFUERTE SR.

VILLAFUERTE JR.

Learned from father

The exchanges between the governor, who is fiercely opposing the breakup, and his father, who along with Camarines Sur Rep. Arnulfo Fuentebella is pushing for it, became the highlight of the hearing, and at some point touched street-pitch. Both claimed their own respective supporters.

"Yesterday I learned I learned from my father. This is a nationalism issue," the governor said, his voice rising. "We are fast to turn faces. Let's just fight it out in the election."

His father shot back: "The trouble is, he doesn't fight me. He's a lame duck." The exchange drew chuckles from the senators.

The House of Representatives has passed the bill with a vote of 209 against one. The proposed new province will outshine the fourth district with Caceres and the fifth district with six towns and two city from the 35 towns and two city Camarines Sur province.

The new province will include the towns of Camaligan, Canaman, Gainza, Legazpi Pamplona, San Jose, Sipocot, Tinambac, Goa, Ragan and Imagay of the fourth district and the towns of Buhi, Bulusan, Ruhi, Bula, Iriga, Nabua and Iriga City of the fifth district.

If approved by Congress and signed into law by President Aquino, a plebiscite will be called for residents of Camarines Sur to vote on the new province.

Lawyer Genevieve Alicante-Guevarra of the Comelec, however, said the body had no budget for a recall election or plebiscite this year.

She said the poll body's priority was the automation of next year's elections.

"As of the current budget, we don't have the money for the conduct of elections, including plebiscite," she said in reply to a question by Sen. Aloy Arroyo.

Hearing this, Sen. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., chair of the local government committee, remarked: "This is... no is not going to be decided here. It's has been envisioned that the Comelec doesn't have funds, I don't know how to continue the process."

Opposition' say

Opponents claimed that the breakup would make the province poor. But the main proponents, including the elder Villafuerte, said they would actually facilitate the delivery of services, and make the provincial government more responsive to the needs of the people among others.

"The argument of the opposition is it will make the province poor is a misleading generalization that disregards the intelligence of the people of Camarines who will evaluate the merits or demerits of the division of the province," the elder Villafuerte said.

Govs reach consensus to support sin tax bill

THE MAJORITY of the country's governors have reached a "broad consensus" to support the administration-endorsed Sin Tax Reform measure pending in Congress seeking to restructure the excise tax on alcohol and tobacco products, according to the national president of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP).

"Our decision to support the bill is premised on the following: that the proposed law will generate revenues to finance 100 projects, realize standing-related expenditures on health, services, and save the country's young and poor from lifestyle diseases," said Oriental Mindoro Gov. Alfonso "Doy" Umali, LPP head, in a press statement.

"We believe that now is the time for us to re-state party lines and support this bill. The benefits to our people that would result from this law would affect us more government of Filipinos," he said.

Umali concurrently heads the League of Local Authorities of the Philippines, the umbrella organization of the leagues of governors, city mayors, municipal mayors and barangay and other local officials.

The consensus was arrived at during a recent meeting in Manila of the LPP's executive board, he said.

Umali also reiterated an earlier commitment of governors of tobacco-producing provinces to vote support among congressmen for House Bill No. 3727 authored by Cavite Rep. Joseph Emilio Abaya. The measure proposes a shift from a multi-tiered to a uniform tax system for cigarettes. Brands currently taxed P5 per pack under the existing model have to pay P40 to P45 in three years.

'Level the playing field'

One of the bill's most vocal supporters, Gov. Juan "Chiz" Escudero of Sorsogon, which is a leading tobacco-producing province, had earlier said HB 3727 would level the playing field by ensuring tax, regulatory pricing and allowing the entry of more producers.

The sin tax issue has pitted lawyers against the rest of the so-called Northern Alliance, which includes his own son, Sorsogon Rep. Ryan Singson, which is opposing the proposed modified excise system.

Fortunato Leoncio; 63

MR. FORTUNATO D. Leoncio of Malagasi and Pandi, Bulacan died of a heart attack on March 20 at age 63.

Leoncio, born on March 8, 1949, is survived by wife Celia, their children Cinthia Singson, Sheila Prandilla, April Gay and Jun Erik.

He worked mostly at the Presidential Management Staff in Malacañang until he retired last year. He was also a member of the Freemasons Ng Bituin Lodge 197.

He is being mourned at the Loyola Memorial chapel 8 in Sucat, Parañaque. Interment will be at the Manila Memorial Park at a date yet to be set.

In life, Leoncio was kind, generous and loving—a blessing to all who crossed his path.

Solon wants foreign airlines' tax scrapped

TREÑAS

A LAWMAKER from Iloilo City has directed a urging the government to exempt international air carriers from paying air carriers tax to bring in more tourists and encourage investments in the country.

Rep. Jerry Treñas is seeking a review of the air carriers tax and has filed House Bill No. 4444 which will scrap what he described as a "grossly onerous tax regime".

In a press statement, he said international air transport into connectivity is the most critical infrastructure linking the Philippines to the global export markets of tourism and investment business. He added that repealed revenue loss resulting from the scrapping of the air carriers tax would be offset by the "huge increase in tourist arrivals, the surplus of business investments from this source also."

"The bill aims to advance Philippine tourism, trade, employment, economic integration with the rest of the world eliminating the negative impact the customers carriers tax and gross Philippine billings on our inter-connectivity and competitiveness as an international investment destination," he said.

He said airport transport inter-connectivity is the network of some 6.3 million overseas Filipino workers and Filipino migrants, adding airline industry provides a seamless travel connection.

"Our neighboring Asian countries do not tax foreign airlines," he added, citing even China and Japan have relaxed their tax policy to attract more foreign carriers.

Recto, Cuevas tangle over ₱34.7M check, other cash deposits

By Michael Lim Ubac

ACCUSATIONS flew thick and fast between lead defense counsel Serafin Cuevas and Senator-judge Ralph Recto minutes before the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona adjourned on Thursday for a month-long break.

"Very unfair!" protested Cuevas, coming short Recto's line of questioning on the ₱34.7 million check from the safe of the Basa Guidote Enterprises Inc. property in Manila in 2001.

Cuevas shot down Recto's observation that the check and other deposits and investments of the Chief Justice and his wife had not been declared in his statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN).

"You know the incidental this very moment my objection is that: You're making a statement here but not subject on the issue in favor of one party — because the defense never discussed these documents. It is the only concept that you have is the concept coming from the prosecution," Cuevas said.

"We have not yet presented evidence in that regard, so how can we know no evidentiary, materiality, significance, consequence? I happen to be a judge of this case, I will plead respectfully, kindly receive the evidence with an open mind. Because if your mind is already closed then the deposits are Chief Justice's deposits, then it's not consistent, therefore, you believe that he has violated the provision of SALN," said Cuevas.

"No, no," Recto retorted. "I am not making a conclusion. I'm just trying to understand it because I have been, whether testimony or documentary ... whether presented by both the prosecution and defense. (The) in their most important issue now (since) we're almost done with the real properties."

The senator "premised" is "know" to both parties.

Heart of the problem

Recto had earlier stated that he was "glad on that late day (to hear)" that the court was now saying now the "personal and other properties (of the SALN) which has a relation to cash, cash in bank, and liabilities."

"This is the heart of the problem," said former President Jose Pratz Enrile agreeing with Recto's observations.

Quo, during his turn to cross by former Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, Recto said that Mrs. Corona had received "natural" the payment for sale of the 1,300-square-meter property on Legaspi and Perfecto Streets in Sampaloc to the Manila city government.

Bank accounts

When Recto said that the payment had been deposited in the Philippine Savings Bank in Binondo, Cuevas said that this was "not clear."

Recto proceeded to enumerate the peso accounts of the Chief Justice with different banks, citing the exact "cash in hand" as of Dec. 31, 2010, three weeks before the impeachment trial began.

"If I look at the SALN of the Chief Justice, there was also no financial evidence that on Dec. 12, 2011, a withdrawal from the Philippine Savings Bank ... but that cannot be? asked Recto.

"That appears to be the evidence of the prosecution. If you're asking our side, just kindly note. We have not yet, we have not through with [the] presentation of defense evidence," Cuevas replied.

"I understand," said Recto. He then asked if the defense would be presenting the withdrawal of the money in its evidence.

"That's not this version of our defense. This money ... (is) merely held in trust by the Chief Justice coming from the proceeds of the Basa Guidote account and (she) invests part of it on time by the children," said Cuevas.

Ranging the panel, Enrile stopped the two. "We have plenty of time to assess this. We have one month to ponder this and (then) we have limited number of days to cross ... at that point we will know the whole picture," Enrile said.

'Atienza's testimony opens door to Basas'

From page A1

the Basilo property to the Manila city government for ₱34.7 million in 2001.

The property in Sampaloc, Manila, used to be owned by Basa Guidote Enterprises Inc. (BGEI), a company owned by Corona and her relatives. Its site has since under scrutiny for the latter's impeachment court, which is looking into the source of the Chief Justice.

'Not even speculator'

Arguing on the motion for prosecution of Justice Manilo Mayor Lito Atienza as defense witness on Thursday and the BGEI list only as evidence of Corona's funding source, the prosecution is studying the option of tapping Catalina's subpoena to subpoena witnesses when the trial resumes on March 7.

The trial is on a six-week recess.

Maritime Rep. Mitos Quimbo, another prosecution spokesperson, said that Atienza's testimony should further compel Corona to personally testify for the impeachment court because his actions showed he was not a mere spectator in the affairs of his wife's family companies.

The prosecution said Atienza's testimony further involved Corona in the accusation in his wife's unpaid takeover of his family's company.

Arguing said Corona's claim that he had nothing to do with the latter corporate row as BGEI was "shielded" by Atienza's testimony that the Chief Justice accompanied his wife when the latter paid for the 3,020-square-meter property was negotiated.

"I think Chief Justice Corona should speak up since the witness, judges and the public for his accountancies, like saying he doesn't meddle in (his) affairs and yet Mayor Atienza said he (Corona) personally negotiated the sale," Arguelles said.

At Thursday's trial, Atienza testified that the Corona couple met him in his office in 2001 to ask for ₱9.8 million for the Sampaloc property, which the City Hall wanted to convert into a public market to replace the one to be taken over by a tenant of the Light Rail Transit.

The Coronas eventually settled for ₱34.7 million for the property and the sales proceeds were deposited in the bank account of Corona at the Land-Bank branch in Makati city.

Trial until June

Atienza said that that was the first time he met Corona. He recruited Asuncion, Chief Legislative Counsel Jeremy Emmanuel Rivera, and as a classmate of Corona at the Ateneo Law School.

Arguelles claimed that while Corona had declared that he never embroiled in the family squabble in BGEI, the Chief Justice had used BGEI to explain the sources of his sizable assets, the ₱12 million cash advance he obtained from the corporation to buy condo units, and the ₱37.68 million worth of time deposits, which he claimed were BGEI funds, that he withdrew from PSBank on the same day he was impeached.

Quimbo said the prosecution was optimistic that the trial would end before June 6, when Congress resumes its regular sessions.

"But in all honesty, it would be unfair for us to impose the schedule on the defense," said Quimbo.

Family squabble

The defense panel styled out calling Henry Sy and Ang to the stand.

"We will not call them," defense counsel Ramon Esguerra said. "Court no such will suffice.

Moreover, they are still hostile and we found it will be given to the defense."

Atienza testified on the government's purchase of the BGEI-property but family included the squabble between Corona and her in-law ownership of BGEI.

Asst. Sec. Angelo Guiuna of managing control of BGEI even though the latter's father, Eugenio Kuo, delegated his responsibilities to his sister-in-law Corona, and although her mother, Asuncion Basa, owned only 37 percent of BGEI's shares.

Corona's involvement in the BGEI dovetail from her father and mother, the company's president and board secretary since 1963, documents showed. Asst's father, Jose Ma. Basa III, was BGEI majority stockholder.

All accounted for

Esguerra said the ₱12 million loan or cash advance that Corona took from the BGEI and declared as a liability in his statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) could be explained with an Asia-and Santo Rico nothing.

"They can look at it their way," he said in a text message, when asked if the possibility of the time taking the witness stand could not be avoided in case the ₱34.7 million loan is taken up. "But every case can be duly accounted for. That is even on the assumption that there is a demand for accounting and it is necessary."

Sen. Franklin Drilon has said that Sen and Sister Rory could be presented as rebuttal witness, as if the entry on cash advances from BGEI in Corona's SALN would be raised during the trial.

Irrelevant

Sen. Rey El, a Corona lawyer, played down the possible testimony of Sen and Sister Rory who have resigned Corona of using his position in governmental for the benefit of his wife. He received a check of ₱34.7 million "retired" for BGEI.

Drilon, however, pointed out that the capital gains tax and value-added tax had not been paid until now and that the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) is "irrelevant."

Elaborating underscored the break in the impeachment trial.

Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said it was an opportunity for Filipinos "to focus on other matters." MMF a report from Sheryman Bordadora

P-Noy welcomes Kuwaiti Amir to Malacañang

By Norman Bordadora

KUWAITI Amir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, late night expressed his condolences to Aquino on the death of Cardinal Jaime Sin, the Philippines' great champion in the anti-Marcos effort to liberate the oil-rich state when it was occupied by Iraq several years back.

Meeting with President Aquino in Malacañang on the first day of his state visit, the Amir said he was happy to be in the Philippines and commended his visit invitation to the Filipino leader to visit Kuwait.

"We would like to welcomed happily the excellent relations that exist between Kuwait and the Philippines," Sheikh Sabah said in his opening statement during the bilateral meeting.

"The Philippines's position ... provided with other countries in liberating Kuwait ... There here, I would like to extend my appreciation and thanks for this act," he added.

President Aquino welcomed Sheikh Sabah in Malacañang, where the royal and dignitary was greeted with a 21-gun salute.

A little dance was also rendered for the Amir in the Palace.

The five-day state visit of the Kuwaiti Amir is expected to intensify economic relations and boost investments in the Philippines, Malacañang said yesterday.

Sheikh Sabah is scheduled to unveil the marker for the Sheikh Al Ahmad Global Logistics Logistics City, at the Clark Export Processing Zone on Tuesday.

The Palace said Kuwaiti investments in the Philippines include the $2 billion Kuwait and Gulf Link Co. investment in Clark Field, Pampanga, the recently-acquired shipping company Negros Navigation. Kuwaiti businessmen have also expressed interest in investing in the Subic Bay Freeport, aviation, and Sabsbay's 140-hectare development in Batasan, Pamanga said.

The government said Kuwait currently hosts more than 140,000 Filipino workers.

Among the agreements scheduled to be signed by the two countries are a memorandum of understanding on agricultural and fisheries cooperation, an agreement on the waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official or service passports, a cultural agreement, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the recruitment and employment of Filipino household service workers, and another on the field of labor cooperation.

Defense fears Coronas would be ridiculed if they testify

From page A1

mobile religious organization and a Catholic schools' association for the Chief Justice to open his dollar accounts, take a leave of absence from the impeachment trial and personality testify in the impeachment trial.

In a two-page letter to Corona delivered to the Supreme Court, the Sentebang Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB) and the Catholic Educators Association of the Philippines' (CEAP) urged Corona to "make good on his word and set his prosecutors straight."

In the letter, the SLB and CEAP urged the Chief Justice to "prove his good faith and personality and open his dollar accounts. The SLB is a Church-based network of religious and lay individuals organized by Jun Awad, while that also runs Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City. Corona is also under fire for his involvement in Lingayen Dagupan Archdiocese Foundation Colleges.

The CEAP is the largest educational association in the country with 1,200 member institutions and has close links with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education, which is headed by Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Socrates Villegas.

"Mr. Chief Justice, it is only by truth-telling that you can prove that your actions are honest and in public responsibility. The impeachment court will be a good, if not the last, venue for truth-telling," the groups added.

No need

But the defense lawyers said there is no need for the couple's testimony for now. The battle-line of the lawyers and the Article 2—Corona's alleged failure to disclose his statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) as well as his wealth—that could very well be explained by other witnesses and their documentary evidence.

"We've always maintained that if we bring them in, any question can be propounded," Salvador said. "They could be put to shame (them). That's also another thing to avoid," the lawyer said in a statement on Colombian Plaza in Pasig Manila.

Quiocho added that though the decision for the counsels-couple not to testify was not yet final, "We feel that as of this time, there is no need or urgency for them to testify."

Quiocho said there was "no hard and fast rule" that the accused should testify in court to prove himself or herself innocent of the charges. "It's the obligation of the prosecution to establish the guilt (and) nothing else," he said.

Among the defense's evidence was Fontana Miranda Hipe or Lito Atienza's testimony on Thursday, saying that the city government purchased in 2001 the ₱34.7 million property from Basa-Guidote Enterprises Inc. (BGEI), a corporation owned by the family of Corona Corona.

The company had figured prominently in the 16 days of the impeachment trial, with Coronas declaring that he had an ₱11-million loan or cash advance from BGEI and listed it as his SALN as among his liabilities.

When a bank official testified that Corona withdrew ₱12.8 million from Philippine Savings Bank on the day he was impeached on Dec. 11 last year, the defense had been quick to say that the amount came from the BGEI property in Manila.

TALK OF THE TOWN Chief Justice Renato Corona with wife Cristina.

Backlash feared

Salvador conceded that the Chief Justice could face a backlash if he doesn't testify, but that he would rather risk it than be subjected to ridicule. "There's no factual evidence that (the ridicule) will happen. (But) I know (at the risk that we may) take it to the end of the day."

On Coronel's prosecutors' claims that he would face the charges if the prosecution, Quiocho said that as he understood it, the Chief Justice vowed to face the charges, but in consultation with his battery of lawyers.

'In due time'

The SLB and CEAP letter addressed to the Chief Justice said: "You have made numerous pronouncements that you will open them in 'due time.' At this point, when the prosecution's rebuttal for truth has refused to on your statement of assets and liabilities and net worth and bank records, there is no more appropriate time to open your dollar account than now."

The SLB and CEAP also called on Corona to take a voluntary leave of absence until such time when the impeachment court renders its decision.

"We believe your continued presence on, and influence upon the impeachment court, would make it extremely decisive in relation to your own trial, will result in a process that cannot be deemed fair nor credible," the letter said.

Letter to SC justices

About 20 SLB and CEAP officials as well as student leaders from Ateneo, De La Salle University, the University of the Philippines, University of the East, Philippine Normal University, Polytechnic University of the Philippines and Pamantasan Lungsod ng Maynilaque gathered in front of the Supreme Court at around 11 a.m. yesterday to wait for the letter to be received.

The letter was delivered by Fr. Jose Quilongquilong, SJ, rector of the Loyola House of Studies in the Ateneo, and other SLB executives to Supreme Court Deputy Clerk of Court and Chief Public Information Officer Atty. Ma. Lourdes Sereno.

SLB executives to Sereno: SLB executives to Sereno: Fr. Erik John Gonlla, SJ, and Fr. Mark Lopez, SJ, and CEAP advocacy officer Butch Lorenzo.

The SLB and CEAP also wrote a separate letter to the 14 justices of the Supreme Court calling on them to "exercise your [voice] moral on the matters of the confidentiality of the dollar accounts of the Chief Justice and on the restrictions on ... till court personnel to participate in the trial as witnesses."

Attached to the letter were a 4-page statement titled "Integrity, Truth and Public Trust," expressing support for the impeachment process and calling on the public to "collectively effect" on this unprecedented action.

The statement was then presented during a "Mass for Truth" held on March 11 at the San Jose Seminary inside the Ateneo campus, which was attended by more than 100 leaders of various religious associations, non-government organizations, student leaders, political parties and cause-oriented groups.

The Senate adjourned this week for the Holy Week, and will resume sessions on April 7. With a report from Jeremy Sering

Power crisis confirmed in Mindanao

From page A1

"Everybody is consuming more than what they contracted," Mr. Aquino told reporters who were invited to observe some parts of the meeting but were asked to leave when the discussions went into the cost of electricity in Mindanao.

During the morning, which included Energy Secretary Jose Rene Almendras and Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) chair Lualhati Antonino, it was pointed out that actual power capacity in Mindanao was only 1,180 mega-watts (MW) now much at 1,300 megawatts.

"This represents everybody who uses power in Mindanao. There is a difference. He (one is consuming less than they use, instead," Mr. Aquino said, while pointing out on a PowerPoint screen the difference between the electricity being generated and the amount being consumed.

Early warnings

The National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP), the private company that operates and maintains the country's electricity transmission network, had warned as early as last year of an impending power crisis in Mindanao, and urged the construction of more power sources, including fuel-driven plants.

Last week, the NGCP said there was an "acute shortage" of electricity in Mindanao, resulting in brownouts across the island's two main grids.

In 2010 the Mindanao grid had suffered a shortfall of 178 MW at maximum of 903 MW from the 1,081 MW shortfall on Feb. 21. It attributed the increase in power supply deficiency in the 20-MW drop in available capacity from 1,117 MW on Feb. 22 to 1,079 MW in mid-March.

Almendras earlier said the ensuing daily brownouts in Mindanao were caused primarily by the shortage of supply and the decision of the electric cooperatives there not to purchase available, though more expensive, electricity from fuel-fired power facilities.

He said the energy department would soon issue an order mandating electric cooperatives to contract and purchase the (the necessary capacity) to ensure adequate and steady electricity supply.

Other officials have pointed out that Mindanao's heavy dependence on cheap hydropower sources makes its power supply vulnerable to drought and decreasing water levels in the watersheds.

According to Almendras, some electric cooperatives were overdrawing power from the 700 mW Agus-Pulangi hydropower complex, required regulating contingency and dispatchable reserves. "Some are reserves that are affected by the grid's regulate frequency and voltage, and to avoid a complete grid shutdown in the event of an emergency power plant shutdown," Almendras said in a statement.

"It is possible that the days for zero-expensive version actual available capacities could have been misread or misinterpreted by certain equations. One data doesn't lie. We trusted by the data (we have)," she said.

Almendras said the NGCP was not withholding excess power to stimulate a power shortage.

"It does not benefit us to withhold supply as the NGCP cannot have a direct or indirect stake or interest in the generation and distribution businesses," she said.

Hidden agenda

Asked why the NGCP was insisting on the load curtailment scheme, Goyo said: "I think there is a hidden agenda in this problem."

Ramadan, Davao del Sur Mayor Sulaiman Kimay said he suspected that the power-curtailment scheme was aimed at benefiting private power generation companies.

He said with that the ranged power-rates, generation companies would make more money from their fuel-fired plants because electric cooperatives, such as Inecoco, would be forced to buy electricity from them to reduce the sufferings of their consumers.

"It would mean more expenses on the part of the consumers and more money for independent power producers," he said.

With reports from Inquirer Mindanao

P-Noy: There's power surplus in Luzon

By Norman Bordadora and Amy R. Remo

PRESIDENT Aquino yesterday sought to clarify media reports of a looming power crisis in Metro Manila that would result in lengthy power outages.

"There is a minimum 1,500 megawatt surplus in Luzon," Mr. Aquino told reporters as he presided at a meeting of energy officials on the Mindanao power crisis yesterday.

Energy Secretary Jose Rene Almendras said the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) had been misquoted in the report about a looming power crisis in the metropolis.

He said NGCP officials said they had actually averted a crisis through a system already in place for the power grid.

The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) yesterday said Metro Manila has been spared from blackouts that could have ruined after a 300-megavolt ampere transformer at the Tiwi substation in Los Piñas City broke down last Tuesday.

Clarifying reports, Meralco spokesperson Joe Zaldarriaga stressed that "there had been no blackouts nor brownouts as a result of the transformer outage."

There are, however, details in the statement that do not have power but this was due solely to the "scheduled maintenance services" as previously announced through newspapers and social media outlets, Zaldarriaga said in a phone interview.

On Thursday, Meralco issued a statement, assuring the public that it had already put in place the necessary measures that helped prevent a nation-wide blackout over the past few days.

It admitted, however, that the breakdown of the transformer remained "a serious concern" that should be addressed immediately.

The NGCP has assured the public that the so-called "N-1 contingency" of the Luzon grid was and will continue to be able to avert a blackout that could have affected thousands of Metro Manila residents.

In a separate statement, the NGCP explained that the "N-1 contingency" referred to the ability of the power grid to withstand the loss of a major system components with minimal disruption to the grid, as it has the necessary reserves.

Whitney: Death by drowning

From page A1

ney, spokesperson of the Los Angeles County Coroner's office, told AFP. "We feel that there was a heart event, complicated by cocaine use" before she drowned.

No foul play

Ed Winter, deputy chief of coroner investigations, was more explicit when asked by the LA Times to explain the drowning. "She may have had a heart attack," he told the newspaper.

She had cocaine in her body when she died, said a coroner's office statement, which described her death as an "accident," and the cause as "drowning" and "effects of atherosclerotic heart disease and cocaine use."

"How cocaine's associated, I don't understand it bathtub filled with water, cocaine intake," the statement said. "No caution or foul play is suspected."

A final coroner's report will be available for release within two weeks.

Other drugs

Specialists had urged since her death that the singer may have succumbed to a lethal cocktail of prescription drugs and alcohol.

Other drugs were found in her system, but which did not contribute to her death, the coroner's office said. They included marijuana, diphenhydramine (sold over-the-counter as Benadryl) and Diphenhydramine (Benadryl).

The TMZ celebrity news website quoted a coroner's office official as saying Houston used cocaine "immediately prior to her collapse"—but investigators who arrived on the scene found no traces of cocaine or any other illegal drug.

That was because "an individual" removed all traces of cocaine from the room before authorities arrived, the website said, adding that the person was the same one who supplied the drug to Houston.

Chronic cocaine use

The coroner's office spokesperson said chronic use of cocaine was likely a key factor in Houston's death.

"Chronic use, had she not had the preexisting heart disease and cocaine use, she may not have drowned," he said. "The cocaine worsens the factors as it harms, for example to constrict, which could ... set you up for a cardiac event."

Cocaine use has been known to cause damage to the heart and could have caused Houston's death, said Dr. Michael Fishbein, professor of pathology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. He had no role in the investigation.

He said a likely scenario was that Houston's cocaine use interfered with the normal function of her heart.

"There's no reason to foresee in a healthy person you're incapacitated," Fishbein said.

The late star's sister-in-law and manager, Patricia Houston, said it had been possible to forecast that drugs would claim the singer's life. "The handwriting was kind of on the wall. I would be kidding myself to say otherwise."

"We are saddened to learn of the untimely results, although we are glad to now have closure," Patricia wrote in a statement to The Associated Press.

Houston's shock death cast a pall over the Grammy Awards on Sunday night in Los Angeles, with several tributes in the singer—and a public prayer—added to the show at the last minute.

Houston was buried on Feb. 16 in a New Jersey cemetery next to her father after an emotional four-hour funeral service in the Newark Baptist church where she came as a child. The service, attended by friends, family and superstars such as Oprah Winfrey, Tyler Perry, Alicia Keys, Mariah Carey, Mary J. Blige, Jennifer Hudson and Roberta Flack, was watched worldwide.

The singer of hits including "I Will Always Love You" sold over 170 million records during a nearly three-decade career. She influenced a generation of younger singers, from Christina Aguilera to Mariah Carey.

Unable to hit high notes

But by the end of her career, she was a shocking cautionary tale of the toll of drug use. Her album sales plummeted and she has stopped coming. Her once serene image was shattered by a wild demeanor and bizarre public appearances. She confessed to abusing cocaine, marijuana and pills and was eventually unable to hit the high notes as she began to perform.

"The biggest devil is me. I'm either my best friend or my worst enemy," Houston told ABC's Diane Sawyer in an infamous 2002 television interview with then-husband Bobby Brown by her side.

She had been attempting a comeback when she died, but critics panned a remake of the movie "Sparkle" in which she sang the gospel-tinged "I'm Eye a on the Sparrow."

Interest in her music skyrocketed after her death, pushing her songs back on to charts and into heavy rotation on the radio.

Daughter gets all

Earlier this month it emerged that Houston had left all of her assets to her daughter Bobbi Kristina, born from her troubled marriage to singer Bobby Brown, who gets nothing.

Bobbi Kristina, who is currently 19, will inherit the proceeds from all of the late singer's money, furniture, clothing, personal effects, jewelry and cars, according to the will published on March 7.

A few days later, Bobbi Kristina and the piano on which her mother was shot beat.

ADS A9

Kaya faces Stallion; Chieffy back on Air Force wings

By Cedrik P. Tupaz

CEBUFFY Caligdong makes his much-awaited Air Force return even as Kaya aims to solidify its hold of top spot when it collides with Stallion today in the United Football League at the University of Makati field.

Sidelined by a knee injury since last January, Caligdong, who played in all five games of the national team in the AFC Challenge Cup in Nepal, is expected to start when the Airmen face Global at 2 p.m.

With six victories in seven matches, Kaya will be looking to cycle points clear at the top in the 4 p.m. duel with a dangerous Stallion side that bucked up to win during the transfer windows.

Stallion signed up University of Santo Tomas striker GJ Chiuffo, Ateneo midfielder Kim Yu-rosas and former UP Maroon striker Beth Sanchez during the transfer windows, boosting a squad that has made the biggest impact among the newcomers in the Ben division.

Though Stallion went into the three-week break on a losing note after beating to Global, 6-1, manager Ernie Newton said the squad stayed sharp by undergoing merger drills.

Chiuffo, a returnee of the Southeast Asian Games last year, and Kim are available for the clash with Kaya, which is still hoping that ace defender Jason Sobio will be fully fit to duel with the Stallion threat.

Sobio hurt his knee while on national team duty in Nepal. Kaya, though, will embarrass bank Edo Dagiola, who missed the 5-1 win over Stomada last Wednesday due to suspension.

But the spotlight will be on Caligdong, who was injured in the 2-1 draw with Army last Jan. 28.

Air Force has won its last three matches with national player Ian Araneta in the helm with four goals.

Aaron Calandro and older brother Jason, who combined for three goals for the Arrieta in Nepal, as well as Hitesh Bahadosan return to a Global side that also acquired Irvine Marvin and Dhevin Angeles from second division side Laos.

Elsewhere in the more experienced campaigner of the two, leaving placed in the outsiders to the Challenge Cup.

Celtics triumph

Boston applies late defensive switch, repulses Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE—A timely switch took the Boston Celtics rolled to a 100-91 road win Thursday to tighten their lead on an NBA playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

Boston, halted Milwaukee's six-game winning streak using a defensive change while trying to Brad Pierce's 23 points, including 10 of Boston's 16 in the third period.

Pierce was also defensively instrumental in the quarter, when the Celtics held the Bucks to 12 points.

"We switched on everything, which we never do. I mean, we literally never do that," Celtics coach Doc Rivers told reporters. "They were killing us in the first half. The way we looked at it, switching couldn't have been any worse than what we normally do.

"That was a big change. It's unusual for us to give in that quickly, but we thought we needed to do it and I thought it made a big difference defensively for us."

Boston (27-21), near reversals in the Kia and four games ahead of ninth-placed Milwaukee (23-26), carried the momentum into the fourth quarter and pushed its lead to 80-73, which the Celtics protected through the final eight minutes.

"Boston did a good job of taking us out of what we wanted to run," said Bucks scorer Drew Gooden. "They defended the pick and roll exceptionally well with (Kevin) Garnett."

Garnett scored 16 points and 10 rebounds and Rajon Rondo had 19 points and 14 assists for the Celtics.

In New Orleans, Chris Kaman scored 20 points as the Hornets rallied for a 97-90 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers, spoiling Chris Paul's return to New Orleans. *Reuters, AP*

OTHER RESULTS: Boston 101, Warriors 81; Pacers 91, Wizards 83; Sol Hawks 91, Orlando 89; Jazz 103, Kings 102

CELTICS swingman big man Kevin Garnett goes up for a basket. AP/FILE

Aparri joins Petecio in Asian ring semis

ULAAN BAATAR, Mongolia—Flyweight Mary Joan Aparri acted on her experience and ring savvy to outjoint Nethmi's Boxer Mel Nguyen Thi Thursday and join Nesthy Petecio in the semifinals of the 6th Asian Women's Boxing Championships here.

Although the judges gave Aparri a lopsided 28-14 win, the veteran Filipina fighter needed all her skill and guile to turn back the hard-fighting Vietnamese. The score was 3-2 for Aparri in the first round, 12-5 in the second and 13-7 after the duel.

But delegation head and Abap executive Ed Picson acknowledged that the road to the finals "is anything but easy" for the PLDT-Abap boxing team.

"We can't take anything for granted," Picson said.

Aparri advanced against the eighth-Mary Kom of India, who has boxers her to three previous meetings.

Petecio, who gained the bantam-weight medal round Wednesday, will also leave for the semifinals of the tournament, a remaining ground for Olympic hopes Rio, will be held Saturday. The 8-bouts will be on Sunday.

Picson said the girls are inspired by "words of encouragement" from Abap president Ricky Vargas, who has been monitoring developments in Mongolia.

APARRI

Light flyweights Josie Gabuco, the third PH fighter, host her opening bout after Wednesday.

After a rest day Friday, the semifinals of the tournament, a remaining ground for Olympic hopes Rio, will be held Saturday. The 8-bouts will be on Sunday.

Picson said the girls are inspired by "words of encouragement" from Abap president Ricky Vargas, who has been monitoring developments in Mongolia.

5th Summit Point Invt'l under way

A GOLFING holiday in the United States is the grand raffle prize in the 5th Summit Point International, the member-guest golf tournament of the Summit Point Golf and Country Club in Upper City subdivision off today.

The awards ceremony of the 36-hole competition presented by Summit Point Realty (sha-changhwa.32-inch LG LCD is the partner of the player who will win the 18 holiday.

A hundred member-guest pairs are vying for honors in the tournament sponsored by Callaway, J & W Griffiths Inc., Lenaeus, Summit Point Realty, Aqua Haus, Mirawel, Phil Hua Mo, Chang, Oceanus Restaurant, Asia Brewing, The Turf Co., Pinabuo Philippines, Smart, Fringe Wand Above.

Summit Point president Bobbie Lorino and Summit Point project director Hugo Wint Dob will join members and their guests as well as sponsor representatives in the event which will have two shotgun tee-offs, the first at 8 a.m. and the other at 12 noon.

Stake-to-one prizes designated on various parts of the Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed course include a new sedan Callaway golf set, P50,000 cash from New Cosmos Emporium, P50,000 worth of gift certificates from Shoppe House, Ambassador Watch (Limited Edition) from Mariner and Wings Tourism from Autobelo Group.

Summit Point GM James Bologna said trophies will be awarded to the overall titles, the lowest gross and the top three finishers in four divisions.

Manotoc new NGAP head

By Mussig K. Castillo

TOMMY Manotoc, the former national team manager who became a Grand Slam winning PBA coach on the side, was yesterday elected as the new National Golf Association of the Philippines president.

The 62-year-old MAAPI youth development program said he will be a "working president" as he vowed to continue "promoting golf development by putting up quality tournaments all over the country."

Representing Cauayan, Manotoc, who first joined the board in 2010, topped the voting with 46, the same number of votes garnered by former president Rod Feliciano.

Feliciano earned another term as chair, while Cesky Concebello, representing Alabang, was elected vice president after getting 43 votes in the polls at the Manila Bulletin Club.

Jun Galindez, the former Alabang GC president, is the new secretary general.

Abe Rosal, another representative of Calabang, was named treasurer with Pueblo de Dios Aloe Saldivia as the new auditor.

Philip Ella Juico, the former Philippine Sports Commission chair and current president of Pitch Pitch, was elected to the board.

NEW GOLF BOSSES From left, seated, PGC representative Jerry Buenaventura, Alice Ambrosio, Abe Rosal, Raymund Busuego and Roland Theresia. Standing, same order, Rico Agustil, Joe Calderon, Rod Feliciano, Tommy Manotoc, Coley Concebello, Gov. Bonifacio de Castro

Marcelo's retirement opens way for fierce karting succession

SPEED-hungry drivers into action again in the Petron Karting Super Series which rolls off its 2012 campaign today at the Carmona Racetrack in Cavite.

With two-time champion Stefano Marcelo announcing his retirement from competition, battles goes up for the grueling races that will determine the Rookie of the Year and the overall champion.

Among the hotshots capable of succeeding Marcelo at the top are last year's runner-up NJ Bidal of PRPR-C Racing, Franco Reyes of Indian Racing, Jerome Kaden of Team Jolly Calderon, PRPR-C Racing's Mikhael Feliciano Reyes and Uni-All Subic Foley Bambo of One Racing, Archie Lagman, Sacha Feliciano and the rotund Bobby Dominguez of Indian Racing.

Also up for grabs are titles in the 12-drive division, including ROK Senior and ROK Overall.

Sidelights

Azkals' third-place finish in AFC tourney draws praise from backer

THE PHILIPPINE Azkals' amazing performance in the recent AFC Challenge Cup in Kathmandu has been praised by one of its most persistent supporters.

Officials of the main promoter of the event Philippine Makati friendly match in Manila, Malaysia, and Singapore refused "have no place in the sport of football."

"Manolo achieve the Azkals for their historic finish in the AFC tournament," said Manolo's brand manager Pamela Tan. "The Azkals' success will further instill the importance of living an active and healthy lifestyle through sports."

The Azkals edged Palestine, 4-3, in their third last Monday.

Phil Younghusband, the Golden Boot awardee for scoring the most number of goals, struck twice while the Dolisalo brothers, Angel and Juan Luis, had one each as the Philippines recorded its first finish despite coming into the tournament as the lowest seed.

Big NCA derby set Tuesday

THREE of the finest rookies in the country are hoping that promises to be a blockbuster leg of the National Cookers Association (NCA) derby season on Tuesday night at the Filoil Sports Arena in Pasig.

Co-leader Clarie "Aceng" Ang, Joel Jones and Jimmy Yuson said the rookies do to defend Philippine sandfighting will field their toughest rookies in the Superman Competition's number derby. to test Tuesday's derby hosted by former Alaska Boy Yuson, Wan Mayor Nestor Mercado, and Leo Ortillos, one entries emerged past champions with 4 points each.

They are "Rebel Ali Ali" of Mayor Mercado, "Ali Ali Ali" of Jun Topacio and Jaclene Co, "Ali Baba's Talisman Gotta" of Rodrick Clarencio and Jimmy M., "Yan Lan" of Mayor Dan Higgins, "Jade Rocom 2" of Alan Cambo, "Solid-sand Diamond" of Shangrila Cruz, "Boy 2 Diamonds Remedial" of Bro Valenzuela, "Bel Bonagate" of Irene Medina and "Shanggrila" "Thunderbird" of Yuson.

RACING
BY TOP CHOICE
At Santa Ana Park

Before Lleyton Hewitt* was slamming it in Wimbledon, he was hitting it in Manila.

ACCEL

23rd MITSUBISHI LANCER International Junior Tennis CHAMPIONSHIP

FREE ADMISSION!

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE:
March 18-19 - Qualifying Round
March 20 - Opening Ceremonies
March 20-25 - Main Draw
March 24 - Doubles Finals
March 25 - Singles Final

Rizal Memorial Tennis Center, Malate, Manila

FREE Tennis Clinic
March 25, 2012
Rizal Memorial Tennis Center

Application for all interested players ages 18 and below. Clinic will be conducted by [illegible] tennis coaches.

For reservations, call the PHILTA Office c/o Ms. Lolita Mallare at (02) 523-6415.

Be one of the first to catch a glimpse of the future of tennis at the 23rd Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship from March 18 to 25, 2012. For more than two decades, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corporation has been a big supporter of this grassroots event that helps prepare up and coming tennis superstars for the big leagues.

Watch the tournament highlights and final matches on PTV 4, April 8, 2012 (Sunday) from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

*2007 Winner

Catch them right here in Manila before they conquer the world

In cooperation with:

ITF Juniors

Century Park Hotel

TecniFibre Official Tennis Ball

Hidden Spring

Drive2earth

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ortuoste

SPORTS

SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 2012

Alaska books q'finals slot

Lights still on, however dimly, for Meralco

By Marong R. Castillo

ALASKA finished off regulation with a flurry and won an overtime last night, pounding out a 102-100 victory over Barangay Ginebra and Talk 'N Text to grab the Aces the third quarterfinal seat in the PBA Commissioner's Cup at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

The Aces dropped 16 unanswered points inside the final 5:25 of the fourth and Asian Dorsett capped off their swashbuckling tuneup by hitting a putback off a Cyrus Baguio miss with nine seconds of a second left to overcome for the rousing finish.

Alaska closed out its eliminations round stint with a 5-6 record, leaving the rest of the field scrounging for the last three quarterfinal berths heading into the final three playdates of the round.

Meralco earlier survived Air21's stubborn and physical stand to hammer out a 101-91 victory last night and keep its slim chances of advancing to the playoffs.

Building leads of as many as 22 points right in the opening period, the 8-time reigning champs saw their lead whittled down to 4-5 as Earl Barron scored 24 points and Air 21 Banners had 16 points and 18 rebounds.

Meralco is now hoping that Barangay Ginebra, Powerade, and Barako Bull do not win no more than two games in order to keep a 6G1 records for the last quarterfinal slot. And with the Kings and the Energy playing tomorrow, guaranteeing that one of them gets to five wins, Meralco's window even gets smaller.

Defending champion Talk 'N Text, B-Meg and Alaska have five wins each, while the Gin Kings, the Tigers and the Energy all have four victories.

Ginebra will face two games to play, and Powerade will still clash with the Llamados next Sunday.

"We wanted to give ourselves a chance for that playoff slot. We are very much aware that it is not in our hands," Meralco coach Ryan Gregorio told reporters. "But there is a small window of opportunity and we wanted to grab it."

The Tigers missed nine total field goal attempts in the final 5:25 as they blew a 92-76 lead before eventually dropping to a 4-6 record.

Meralco finished with 20 points and a season-high-tying 20 rebounds, while Rambo Custodio, who dropped overtime with a runner jumper with 54.9 left, had 19 like Cyrus Baguio.

Meanwhile, Talk 'N Text tries to move closer to the No. 1 ranking today when the Tropang Texters battle Rain or Shine in a Phoenix Fuel-presented road game at the Ilocos Norte Sports Complex in Laoag City.

GAME TODAY
12 noon Talk 'N Text vs Rain or Shine (Ilocos Norte Sports Complex, Laoag City)
GAMES TOMORROW
4:15 p.m. — Powerade vs B-Meg
6:30 p.m. — Ginebra vs Barako Bull
(Smart Araneta Coliseum)

PASOLO Hotshots of Air 21 attacks the basket while Earl Barron and Sol Mercado of Meralco try to stop him. ALVIN SALONGA

Mendoza seals semis duel with top seed Serbian

By Marc Anthony Reyes

JUBBOK Zoninio Mendoza sustained his clean-fighting run with a resounding 6-3, 6-3 triumph over Jack Schipanski of Australia in the boys' singles of the Mitsubishi Lancer international junior tennis championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Striking behind a big serve, Mendoza swapped up the quarterfinal win in 65 minutes despite the stifling heat and ended a semifinal clash with top seed Nikola Milosevic of Serbia, who retained his no-step-back in 2 triumph over Omar Jasika of Australia.

It was Mendoza's second win for the day as he earlier mowed up his pampered third-round match against Li Haoyu of China in the morning within 7-6 (7-3), 7-5 (7-4) sets.

"He is playing steady and offers different style against different opponents," said his coach Martin Mias. "If he's going all the way it's going to be his serve and forehand that will take him there."

The left-handed Mendoza attacked Schipanski's shaky forehand to quickly set the tone. His match with the 6-foot-2 Skye was halted by rains Thursday.

Mendoza, a practice player for the Gerflours Ube-Ube Philippine Davis Cup team, said he is bent on becoming the first 9ft-ipino to win the prestigious crown.

"I'm already here, I will go all the way," said Mendoza, who was runner-up in the PCA Open singles last year.

Milosevic beat Mendoza, 7-6, 6-1, to their Kiri tourney last month in the Bangkok ITF that saw the Filipino blowing a 5-2 lead in the first set.

"Now they know each other better, and it will all come down to execution tomorrow," said Mias of his ward.

Jesse Betcombes reached the finals of the boys' singles here last year but bowed to Andrew Whittington of Australia.

MENDOZA

Aplus METRO
Editor Joseph Voltaire L. Contreras

'Extort' cop learns about 'honesty'

By Julie M. Aurelio

"HONESTY" is indeed the best police policy.

A retired policeman and two civilians were arrested on Thursday afternoon for allegedly posing as traffic officers running an extortion racket in Quezon City.

Retired SPO2 Joey Olga, 55, Ruvido Calcuerras, 43, and Monsano Ebe, 55, were apprehended by an "ope-

STORY: A12

INTRODUCING THE CIGNAL PREPAID CARDS
The newest way to make reloading Premium Channels easy and convenient. Available at Cignal dealers nationwide.
You can also reload via SMART load retailers.
cignal
visit your nearest Cignal dealer now.

'He was a scholar who took out trash for cash'

2 suspects fall in honor student's slay

By Nathaniel R. Meliccan

HE WASN'T the valedictorian, but Russell Cruz posthumously drew the most poignant applause during Recognition Day at Signal Village National High School in Taguig City yesterday.

"We won our graduating student who died on Tuesday," the senior said of Cruz, the honor student who was shot dead by two men who grabbed his cell phone and PlayStation Portable (PSP) gaming console outside his house.

Three days after the killing, Taguig police presented two suspects: Bobby Indapan, 25, and Arnold Tagaytay, 38.

The owner of the motorcycle used in the robbery led investigators to the two suspects, said Taguig police chief Senior Supt. Tomas Apolinario. "We believe our case is strong. We have six eyewitnesses and we recovered from them the gun used in the incident," Apolinario told reporters.

During the program, Cruz's sister Kristine tearfully received the certificate and medals commending her brother for finishing at the top of his section with a general average of 95.20. Cruz, 16 (not 18 as earlier reported), would have graduated first honorable mention on Tuesday.

"He was made a senior because He had big dreams. He wanted to be a seaman but we could not afford it. He opted instead for a computer-related course which would have been funded by a scholarship he got from Old Boandalers," she told the inquirer after the program.

Cruz was never told that he was graduating with honors. "It's supposed to be a surprise. He's supposed to be told about it only today. I feel guilty that I did tell to him that he was Top One (of his section)," said his class adviser, Mylene Bulkis.

Kristine recalled that Russell, the youngest in a brood of four, was a cheerful teenager, quite tall for his age at 5'7", who made a lot of friends in the neighborhood, from the elders to the kindergarten pupils.

"He was also independent-minded. While my mother (connection is 62-year-old caregiver in Cyprus) would send us money, he never asked for here (allowance) from my father. Instead, he earned his pocket money by collecting can neighbor's trash, for which they would pay him in coins. He would earn P100 in more a day just doing that," she said.

Showing an early knack for electronics, "he even built a speaker system all by himself," Kristine added. Valkyie also noted that the boy particularly excelled in math and physics.

But all that youthful promise suddenly came to a violent end that Tuesday night.

Gang of 5 high school boys nabbed for robbery

By Julie M. Aurelio

FIVE high school boys of a private school are now in hot water following their arrest after they allegedly conspired in job an accessorial on Thursday night in Quezon City.

Case investigator PO2 Jeppee Dimasiano said the suspects, whose ages range between 15 and 16 years old, were arrested after a man identified two of them as among the five who allegedly robbed him on Scout Fernandez Street, Barangay Sacred Heart.

Police were able to recover an Apple iPhone worth P30,000 and an iPad valued at P20,000, but one the P10,000 that the victim, Anthony Lozano, said he also had with him. Police also seized a screwdriver, two bread knives and two bonnets from the suspects.

An investigation showed that two of the five suspects know Lozano and were with the victim at the time of the robbery. They were also taken into custody after they reportedly

GANG OF 5: A13

Why Cebu Pacific doesn't use airbridge

PR IDIOT Ida carrier subsidiary Cebu Pacific Airways on Thursday for letting its passengers go down the plane stairs, and then climb up the airbridge from the tarmac when it could have made them use the airport's ramp, I was flooded with reactions from passengers.

One text message came from my friend, Louie Salun, a regular Manila-Davao City commuter.

That read your column on Cebu Pacific not using it airbridge. I hope it can help us persuade/ pressured to use airbridge for the convenience of passengers. We have brought the matter to attention of Regional Development Council, Region XI Council in Davao City's, pero consigro ang tulo (hard-headed) ng Cebu Pacific.

"(Author) earned 28 (billion) last year, pero ayaw magbuot (but doesn't want to pay) P7,000 for the use of airbridge.

Yan pa ang (Another pain in the neck is) Old Aviation Authority of the Philippines (which manages all airports in the country), wantonly on money raised from fares, that's why they dispense with the use of the airbridge or take reliefs from P7,000 per flight.

In short, they are hotpot (tightwad), at the expense of their passengers.

* * *

The Land Transportation Office should stop the confiscated use of commemorative plates for private cars.

Those plates don't serve any purpose except to tell the world that the owner of the car is a member of an elite group, such as the Philippine Military Academy, Philippine National Police or National Bureau of Investigation.

In short, its owner just wants to show-off.

Owners who attach commemorative plates to their cars... Kill's This year, for example—expect they won't be apprehended for traffic violations.

In other words, the plates are useful in commuter crimes, at best sense.

He should not pay them P200 to mind for if it can't require Cebu Pacific to use airbridge."

* * *

I was handed a letter from Fr. Pilar del Tamarin, a private representative for disabled persons and senior citizens, addressed to Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte, chair of the Regional Development Council (Region XI).

Part of Del Rosario's letter reads: "The non-use of airbridge creates difficulty for mothers with young children and passengers with hand luggage. Travelers are also exposed to bad weather conditions.

* * *

I was told the Codenguen Gang, which owns Cebu Pacific, is

Hair strands may offer clue to teacher's killer

By Nikko Calleja

DNA TESTING may be required to crack this one.

A 23-year-old female Filipino cancer was found dead with multiple stab wounds in her home in Quezon City, police said on Thursday, still sleeping a few strands of hair which survived, police said could be that of her attacker.

Police identified the victim as Jenna Tondol Ramos, 23, a resident of Doña Consolacion Subdivision in Barangay Batasan.

Her sister, Kristine Camille Ramos, reported finding Anna lying face up in her bed, covered in blood and her forehead covered with masking tape, in the early morning of a holiday seven days from the bedroom.

Senior Insp. Roderick Tinga, commander of the local police precinct, noted that Kristine reported her sister's death at around past 7 p.m., two hours after the discovery of the body.

The victim was stabbed at least seven times, Tinga said.

Tinga said investigators are keeping the hair strands found on the victim's hands, a possible sign that Ramos tried to fight off her attacker by pulling the assailant's hair.

Police have ruled out robbery since no cash or valuables were apparently stolen from the victim's house. "It's possible that the victim knew her killer since there was no sign of forced entry into her house or her room," Tinga said.

Senior Insp. Roderick Tinga, commander of the local police precinct, noted that Kristine reported her sister's death at around past 7 p.m., two hours after the discovery of the body.

The victim was stabbed at least seven times, Tinga said.

Tinga said investigators are keeping the hair strands found on the victim's hands, a possible sign that Ramos tried to fight off her attacker by pulling the assailant's hair.

Police have ruled out robbery since no cash or valuables were apparently stolen from the victim's house. "It's possible that the victim knew her killer since there was no sign of forced entry into her house or her room," Tinga said.

PhilPost disowns 2 unions

By Jaymee T. Gamil

THE PHILIPPINE Postal Corp. (PhilPost) yesterday lashed back at yesterday workers seeking the ouster of Postmaster General Joseffina de la Cruz, saying they have not even met the agency's recognized labor union.

"We will deal with the so-called union after it is the PhilPost Employees Union of the Philippines," PhilPost information officer Alan Lacuesta told the Inquirer a day after members of the PhilPost Workers Union (PWU) and the Philpost Rank and File Employees Association (Prafea) staged mass actions against De la Cruz.

"The PWU and Prafea do not even represent one percent of our entire workforce," Lacuesta said. "We all of them are nonexistent employees."

He said PWU president Tino Pagkalinawan has not been with the agency since his failed bid for vice president of the Philippines.

The PWU and Prafea complained that cutbacks of Philpost workers had been held off due to cost-cutting measures initiated by De la Cruz last year.

Gang of 5 nabbed

From page A22

turned out to be disseminators of the suspects.

According to Chief Insp. Rodelio Marcelo, of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, Lozano said he met the two boys at Gateway Mall in Cubao at around 7:30 p.m. on Thursday to sell them Universal loading cards. The victim claimed the two told him that they would introduce him to other boys who were interested in buying the cards.

But when the buyers did not show up at the mall and another meeting place in Balintawak, Lozano decided to go home accompanied by the two boys.

The victim said they were walking along Sgt. Fernandez Street when three men wearing hoods ran toward them and declared that he was being robbed.

The suspects declared Lozano of his gadgets and cash at knife point and escaped aboard a black multicab (DPN 967).

Fortunately for the victim, he was able to flag down a passing police patrol car for help. Police eventually arrested the suspects at the Welcome Rotonda.

The boys underwent inquest proceedings on Friday for robbery.

Sun Business Partners with Maria Montessori International School, Cebu City

HGC to Release Titles to Homebuyers

The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) will release 171 titles to fully-paid buyers of housing units in Las Palmas Village in Sto. Tomas, Batangas; Gen Trias Homes in Cavite; and La Chesa Heights in Quezon City. This policy came following to the 28-quoted pledge of Vice President and HUDCC Chairman Jejomar C. Binay that "poor and hardworking Filipino families should be helped to enjoy the privilege of homeownership."

HGC President Atty. Manuel R. Sanchez made the announcement in conjunction with HGC's continuing review of all its policies on acquired assets and in marketing this same.

HGC, a key shelter agency under HUDCC (Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council) is enabled to mobilize private funds for housing by granting guaranty cover on loans extended by banks for home purchases or housing developments. In 1986, HGC guaranteed the financing for six housing projects by the La Salette Development Corporation (LSDC). The project failed and HGC had to pay the obligations to the investors. In exchange, the projects' assets were conveyed to HGC.

In 2009, LSDC and HGC entered into a Compromise Agreement to settle LSDC's indebtedness. LSDC was to transfer the projects' assets and remit an undetermined value of receivables to HGC. HGC shall then deliver to LSDC a total 521 titles, including 171 titles to fully paid buyers, and withdraw the cases filed against LSDC.

At this point, Sta. Mesa Properties, Inc., a creditor of LSDC, surfaced and asked the titles of some properties that would have been conveyed to HGC. As a result, LSDC was not able to transfer the promised assets and HGC could not release the titles, including the 171 titles to fully paid buyers.

LSDC offered to replace the titles issued by Sta. Mesa Properties. But the offered properties were appraised at only P2,168M as against the P3B (B) worth of properties levied by Sta. Mesa Properties.

HGC may choose not to release the 171 titles to compel LSDC to convey properties of equal value to that levied by Sta. Mesa Properties. "But that", according to Sanchez, "runs counter to HGC's and HUDCC's mission of providing homes to Filipino families."

"These are heartwarming, honest Filipinos who bought from LSDC in good faith; they should not be held hostage by the developer's faults", Sanchez declared. Upon the instruction of VP Binay, HGC will release the 171 titles to fully paid buyers and enlist their cooperation in going after LSDC. Turning over the titles will not negate the criminal liability of LSDC in the fully paid buyers. The buyers are made whole, not by LSDC but by HGC. With the cooperation of the fully paid buyers, HGC will pursue both criminal action against LSDC for violating PD 957 (The Subdivision and Condominium Buyers' Protective Decree) and for civil damages.

HGC is adopting the same policy and strategy in dealing with delinquent with similar cases.

'Extort'

From page A11

city court" (latter) section the ranks of the Quezon City Police District, according to QCPD Director Chief Supt. Marin de la Vega.

The so-called homecity teams were formed by the Philippine National Police last month in a bid to curb corruption in the service, especially among police officers on street patrol duty.

QCPD's 12 subdivisions have a three-man homecity team each, aside from the city's regular homecity mobile based in the headquarters in Camp Bagumbayan.

Olga, Talitzmen and Ellie were arrested at the corner of Regalado and Bonifacio Streets in Barangay North Fairview following complaints that they were extorting money from motorists.

Seaports March 24-25

THE PHILIPPINE national team that topped the World Championship Dragon Boat Championship, sitting with 12 other teams, will compete in the Manila Bay Dragon Boat Festival sponsored by Manila Broadcasting Co. on March 24-25 at Manila Dome Park.

Participants include the Philippine Army team, De La Salle, PBBI Broadcasting, Blue Phoenix, Mahardlika Diaken, RCP Nice Dragons, Bindagit Racing Nadpans, Bonzo Paco Diaken, Sangma, Rogue Filipinas, Erice, DHI Cebu Dragons and MCP home team. The event is promoted by MBC and City of Manila in cooperation with the Philippine Coast Guard, Smart, Cebu Pacific, Senators San Miguel, Cebu Energy Drink, M. Lhuillier, So Lucky Crackers, KDD Hotel, Dost Marine Epoxy and Ilaiba Wine Restaurant.

WORLD BRIEFS

Irish inquiry faults ex-PM, finds corruption

DUBLIN—After 14 years of hearings, a tribunal in Ireland has concluded that "corruption affected every level of Irish political life" and that a former prime minister, Bertie Ahern, had failed to tell the truth about more than $210,000 he received while in office. But the tribunal said it could not conclude that Ahern had taken bribes. The investigative body, known formally as the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments and informally as the Mahon Tribunal, investigated accusations that politicians sought bribes from property developers in return for favorable decisions on land rezoning in and around Dublin during the 1989s and 1990s. The tribunal delivered its final report on Thursday. Beyond what it has to say about Ahern, the 3,270-page report paints a damning picture of Ireland's political culture, and it has sent ripples of consternation through Irish society. The Parliament is scheduled to devote three days next week to discussing the report, and the government will forward it to the police to be reviewed for possible criminal prosecutions. **New York Times (News Service)**

Vatican: Pope will bond with Mexico on first trip

LEON, Mexico—Pope Benedict XVI's arrival in Mexico on Friday (Saturday in Manila) will reveal his ability to commemorate with a people whose passionate celebration of his predecessor threatens to overshadow the pontiff's message of peace and continuity (left) for a country shaken by horrific drug violence, the Vatican's ambassador pledged on the eve of the trip. Pope John Paul II was greeted with ecstatic crowds on each of his five trips to Mexico, whose faithful today consider him practically one of the country's patron saints. In contrast, there was little visible excitement about the more austere and less charismatic Benedict less than 24 hours before his arrival in Guanajuato, a deeply conservative and highly observant state in sun-baked central Mexico. Campgrounds with a capacity for hundreds of thousands of pilgrims are eventually empty. Traffic on the highways leading to the cities of the Pope's visit didn't appear heavier than on an ordinary weekday night. **AP**

UN rights council passes Sri Lanka resolution

GENEVA—The UN Human Rights Council passed a US-backed resolution on Thursday pressing the Sri Lankan government to investigate the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians in the final stages of the civil war with the Tamil Tigers. The vote, 24-15 with eight abstentions, followed an exhaustive campaign by Sri Lanka to kill the resolution, including bringing a high-powered delegation of more than 70 people for the deliberations. A UN panel reported last year that tens of thousands of people died near the end of the 26-year war with the Tamil separatists, many as a result of government shelling of a sliver of the country where the rebels were cornered but which was also crowded with civilians. The panel said it found credible evidence that both sides in the conflict committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the fighting, which ended in 2009. **New York Times (News Service)**

US OKs Egypt aid despite Congress worries

WASHINGTON—The Obama administration has waived democracy requirements to release up to $1.3 billion in aid to Egypt despite concerns that the country is backsliding on commitments it made to democratic governance and rule of law, congressional sources said on Thursday. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton determined that it was in the US national interest to allow $1.3 billion in military assistance in flow, they said. She also certified that Egypt is meeting its obligations in the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, which frees up an additional $250 million in economic aid, they said. **AP**

US Army sergeant to be charged with 17 counts in Afghan murders

WASHINGTON—A US soldier will be charged with 17 counts of murder stemming from the killings of civilians in a shooting rampage in southern Afghanistan, a US official said on Thursday.

The official, confirming the murder charges on condition of anonymity, also said Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales would be charged with six counts of assault and attempted murder.

The charges are likely the deadliest war crime of the 10-year-old conflict by a Western soldier and has further strained already difficult relations between the United States and Afghanistan.

Bales, 38, allegedly walked out of his base in the southern province of Kandahar under cover of darkness on March 11 and killed 17 people in two nearby villages, including women and children. He then allegedly burned some of their bodies, returned to his base and surrendered.

The charges came by way the murders of deaths reported immediately after the atrocity, which have deepened a sense of crisis in the Nato-led mission and renewed questions about the effect of protracted ground wars on America's stretched forces.

The killings came at an already tense time for US-Afghan ties after the inadvertent burning of Korans by American soldiers triggered deadly anti-US protests, "insider" attacks on Nato troops by Afghan forces and an earlier video that showed US Marines urinating on

BALES

the bloodied corpses of Taliban militants.

US officials have pledged to hold the gunman to account, and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has said Bales could face the death penalty if convicted. The soldier's motives remain unknown and investigators are examining if alcohol played a role in the killings.

Initially transferred to a US base in Kuwait, Bales is now at the Fort Leavenworth military prison in Kansas, where he is being held in a solitary cell.

The charges are due to be officially announced on Friday, source close to the investigation said.

Under the US military justice system, prosecutors clear charges to be filed against an accused soldier, then present them to his unit commander, who must then decide whether there is enough evidence to believe a crime was committed.

Bales is then due to appear for an Article 32 preliminary hearing at a still unknown time, where authorities will decide whether to go ahead with a court-martial.

The soldier's lawyer, John Henry Browne, visited his client for the first time on Monday and on Tuesday and told reporters that Bales suffered brain amnesia.

"He has an early memory of that evening and he has a later memory... but he doesn't have memory of the evening in between," Browne told CBS News, adding that the client diminished reports that he was drunk at the time of the attacks.

The lawyer said he would not put forward an insanity defense in any proceedings, but could pursue the case on the grounds of "diminished capacity" due to an emotional breakdown.

A decorated veteran who served on three combat tours in Iraq before deploying to Afghanistan in December, Bales suffered a traumatic brain injury during a road accident in Iraq.

Military officers and experts, however, say there is no firm scientific evidence that shows brain injuries cause violent behavior. **AFP**

UN rights body launches probe of Israeli settlements

GENEVA—The United Nations launched an international investigation on Thursday into Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories, with the United States isolated in voting against the initiative brought by the Palestinian Authority.

The UN Human Rights Council was directed Israel's planned construction of new housing units for Jewish settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, saying they undermined the peace process and posed a threat to the two-state solution and the creation of a contiguous and independent Palestinian state.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu swiftly dismissed the Geneva session on Thursday evening as "hypocritical" and having an "automatic majority against Israel."

A source in Netanyahu's office said Israel would not cooperate with the investigation which he described as biased, adding that Israel did not want to give it legitimacy.

The 47-member forum adopted the resolution to launch a probe by a vote of 36 states in favor, including China and Russia, with one against (the United States). Six abstained, including European Union members Italy and Spain.

The text was introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and cosponsored by states including Cuba and Venezuela.

"In violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, Israel is continuing construction of illegal settlements in the occupied territories including East Jerusalem," Pakistan's ambassador Zamir Akram told the talks.

The Council's resolution called on Israel to take serious measures to prevent settler violence "including confiscation of arms and enforcement of criminal sanctions," and protection of Palestinian civilians and property in the territories. **Reuters**

Student diaries

School's out. You're on vacation. Yey!
Of course, you don't to keep up with what's happening on the social media loop.
Text, chat, surf, download, call, play, tweet, post status
update, upload, text some more.
Aahh... this is the life.
And then the bill comes, followed by the shock.
"P2,000 monthly phone due?!?! I'm a student! I can't
afford this! Mom will kill me!"

HATE
bill shock!

Let us take care of that for you.

SMART presents the anti-bill shock capping feature.

For **iPhone** and **Data Lite** plans, the maximum charge for mobile data use over and above the plan's allowable limits is P1,200. No more, no less. No registration, no expiry, no worries.

If you are a Smart Bro Plan 495 subscriber, SMART lets you enjoy unlimited Internet for only P999 after consuming the allotted 50 hours of data use per month.

LOVE
mobile internet

No more unwelcome surprises. No more budget busters.

So you can focus on being young, hip and smart.

(And so you can stay on your parents' good graces.)

For more information on SMART's anti-bill shock capping feature, check out http://www.smart.com.ph.

SMART
LIVE MORE

LARGEST COVERAGE • RELIABLE NETWORK • AFFORDABLE DATA PLANS

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queco

French cops kill 'Qaida militant,' end standoff

TOULOUSE, France—Mohammed Merah, a 23-year-old former garage mechanic who claimed responsibility for the brutal slayings of four men and three children, was shot dead on Thursday when security forces stormed the apartment where he had barricaded himself for more than 30 hours.

HOUNDED Merah (right), the suspect in the killing of three paratroopers, three children and a rabbi in recent days in France. At left, a boy pays tribute to the four victims at a Jewish school in Toulouse. AFP/FILE

The death of Merah brought a violent end to a series of events that electrified France, but also left unsettling questions about potential lapses in intelligence services and the fear they may have cost.

Merah, a Frenchman of Algerian descent who claimed ties to al-Qaida but apparently acted alone, was struck in the head by a bullet in the final moments of a fierce firefight, said Prosecutor Molins. He prosecutor who led the investigation into the killings. Merah was found dead on the ground after leaping from the apartment through a low window, still firing, according to the interior minister, Claude Guéant. A Colt .45 pistol was found near him, with two rounds remaining and an empty magazine nearby.

The authorities said they had hoped to take Merah alive, seeking information about homegrown terrorists and his shadowy path to Islamic militancy. While the .45 bullet in possession ing attacks by such "lone wolf" killers is widely acknowledged, Merah, who had traveled to both Pakistan and Afghanistan, was well-known to the French police and intelligence services.

Foreign Ministry chief Juppé told French radio before the raid on Thursday morning: "I can understand that one might wonder if there was a lapse or not. We need to bring clarity to this."

Molins and other officials swarmed at points to explain why Merah had failed to attract the attention of investigators earlier, especially before he killed his final four victims, including three children, at a Jewish school on Monday.

"He's not an individual who went to Afghanistan and Pakistan by taking the usual paths, which are obtained by certain facilitation and monitored by specialized services," Molins said. "He figured it out all on his own."

Yet, Molins said on Wednesday that Merah was arrested some years ago in Afghanistan by the Afghan police and turned over to the US military, which transferred him to the French authorities. He had also been on the US government's no-fly list for "some time," a US law enforcement official said on Thursday, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he did not want to be identified discussing sensitive security matters. It is unclear whether the FBI explanders shared that information with the French counterparts.

Asked why Merah had not been under closer scrutiny in France, Molins said that "thousands" of French people travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan, explaining that France does not have the resources to monitor all of them.

Several investigations remain designed, saying that only about 15 to 20 men with a similar profile travel from France to the region each year. AFP/RTR

Busload of 10 among dozens dead in Syria

BEIRUT—More than 40 people died in clashes across Syria on Thursday, opposition activists said, in a UN Security Council call for an immediate end to the fighting that left on dead men.

In the worst incident, 10 civilians, including three children and two women, died when their small bus was shot up in the northern town of Sermarin as they tried to flee to Turkey, the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said.

The SOHR, which depends on a network of local contacts for its information, said it was not clear who was behind the killings. Other activists blamed the Syrian Army, which has been trying to dislodge rebel insurgents in the area.

Dozens of civilians were killed in other parts of the northern provinces of Idlib, in Homs, Hama and Deraa to the south of the country, it said. Five rebel gunmen and seven soldiers were killed in clashes in Homs province, it added.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said Wednesday's unanimous Council resolution had won a clear message to Syria to end all violence, but Damascus appeared to dismiss the document, which is not legally binding.

At least 9,000 people have died in the yearlong revolt against President Bashar al-Assad, according to UN figures in mid-1 week ago, with a motley assortment of fighters grouped in the rebel Syrian Free Army taking on the security apparatus.

Syrian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jihad Makdissi said this week that 3,000 members of the security forces had died in the uprising, which Damascus blames on terrorist gangs.

Heavily armed government forces have made advances in recent weeks, sweeping armed opponents from strongholds around Syria, but they appear to be struggling to consolidate their gains.

Opposition sources said tanks had once again shelled a neighborhood in the northwestern city of Homs, which has been a centre of revolt. Opposition sources said at least 20 people had died in Sunni attacks there in the last 48 hours.

It is impossible to verify reports from Syria because authorities have denied access to independent journalists.

Syrian troops also seized heavy guns on Lebanon.

"Soldiers have not still not able to get inside the town because of fighting, but they are shelling Sermarin and using heavy machine guns," said SOHR head Rami Abdelrahman.

In addition, the SOHR reported heavy fighting in el-Qusair, a town close to the Lebanese border. There residents died in the fighting and four soldiers were killed in an ambush.

Fighting also erupted in northern Deraa, he said, and Assad's forces continued raids in the eastern province of Deir al-Zor and coastal Lattakia province to try to snuff out the rebellion.

The Security Council's resolution was supported by Russia and China, which had both vetoed previous Council resolutions, marking a rare moment of global unity over the crisis. Reuters

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Sluggish exports** pulled down current account in '11 /B3

Editor Raul G. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

■ **Inflation seen** to settle at 2.2%-3.1% in March /B6

DOF expects credit ratings upgrade for PH

Purisima: 'Country is the most underrated in the world'

By Dianne L. Lucas

THE PHILIPPINES should expect an upgrade from credit ratings firms in the near future, given the country's improved economic prospects under the Aquino administration, the government's chief economic manager yesterday said.

"The Philippines is the most underrated country in the world," he told a forum organized by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, referring the the country's credit standing with global debt watchers Standard & Poor's, Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Ratings, all of which rank the country's debt seven notches below investment grade.

Purisima—who is also the de facto head of the Aquino administration's economic team—expressed confidence that the credit watchers "would catch up with their ratings sooner rather than later," adding that the country's ranking is, at present, "four levels below where it should be."

In particular, the finance chief pointed

(BWP) B4

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

March 23, Fri 2

42.955

Stocks close flat

LOCAL stocks yesterday closed flat as global investors were weakening industrial output in Europe and China kept many investors on the sidelines.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index ended 1.88 points, or 0.02 percent, lower at 5,822.41, while the broader market also lost 5.87 points, or 0.17 percent.

All investment sectors in negative territory except for holding firms. The mining oil sub-sector

LOCAL B4

Phinma net profit plunged to ₱57M in '11 from ₱640M

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHINMA Corp.'s net profit declined sharply last year as the global economic downturn gnawed at its steel production and automotive businesses.

Phinma posted a net profit of ₱57.5 million versus the ₱640 million bottom line the previous year, which however included a one-time gain from the sale of its subsidiaries, the company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Friday.

The non-recurring gain in 2010 amounted to ₱549.1 million.

In its disclosure, Phinma said a series of typhoons and delays in the implementation of the government's infrastructure projects weighed on the construction industry.

As such, its consolidated revenues last year increased by a modest 3 percent year-on-year to around ₱9.8 billion, mostly due to slower demand for steel products.

Union Galvasteel Corp., its steel roofing unit, posted a net income of ₱187.9 million in 2011 from the previous year's ₱202 million.

"In spite of these, the company maintained its leadership in the prepainted roofing industry and is poised for a recovery as the government accelerates implementation of its public-private partnership (PPP) programs and as the nation rebuilds in the face of the natural calamities of 2011," the disclosure said.

Phinma's consolidated net income was likewise affected by the losses of its automotive unit, Oto Nissan Ltd., which recorded a net loss of ₱97.1 million.

The loss was attributed to declining prospects from clients as well as production and cost pressures as the company took on more complex computer-generated imagery (CGI) work.

"Our Anime line since continued decisions to better manage client relationships and improve GM expectations to control costs and margins," the company said.

The group also reported a losses equity in net earnings of property unit Phinma Property for ₱125 million from ₱47.5 million in 2010 as the low-cost housing industry was heavily affected by the loan takeout tightening by state-controlled Home Development Mutual Fund or Pag-IBIG.

Meanwhile, earnings from the four schools under the Phinma Education Network (PEN) grew by 6 percent to ₱131.2 million. Total enrollment expanded by 2 percent to 23,964 students.

PEN also approved school facilities last year and also positioned well in terms of graduate examination passing rates, the disclosure said.

Financial services affiliate AB Capital, on the other hand, grew net income by 30 percent to ₱263 million from the previous year.

Firm hit hard by global crisis

MEDICare
HEALTHCARE SERVICE CONTRACT SIGNING
Philippine Trade and Training Center, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
February 17, 2012

MEDICARE CONTRACT SIGNING

Stocks

From page B1

slumped the most, shedding by 1.2 percent.

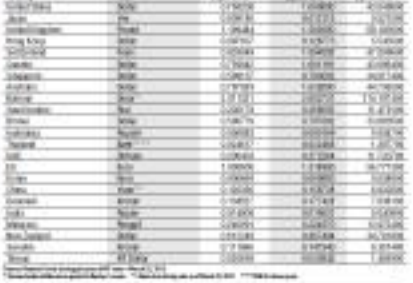
Value turnover amounted to ₱6.19 billion. There were nearly twice as many stocks that declined for every stock or rose that advanced.

On Wall Street, there was also a cautious air as investors worried over the drop in auto orders in February and China, which still have a big adverse impact on global growth.

The Dow Jones industrial average shed 78.44 points or 0.60 percent, to 13,040.14 on Thursday. Doris C. Dumlao

THE BIGGEST MOTORING EVENT OF THE YEAR!
BPI Family
Auto Loan
PRESENTS
MANILA International
AUTO SHOW
MARCH 29-APRIL 1, 2012
WORLD TRADE CENTER METRO MANILA
MITCMPI EAST WING | PHILIPPINE TRADE TRAINING CENTER
10AM-10PM

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE



CURRENCIES

Sluggish exports pulled down current account in '11

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE COUNTRY posted a lower surplus in its current account in 2011 on account of the contraction in export earnings resulting from sluggish global demand.

Still, the surplus in the current account remained significant because remittances continued to be strong despite the problems now upsetting most labor markets abroad, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

Data from the BSP showed that the surplus in the current account—which covers cash flows from trade in goods and services—reached $7.1 billion last year, down by 4.7 percent from the $8.5 billion reported the previous year.

The decline in the surplus was driven largely by the 6.5 percent drop to exports to $47.23 billion.

But the impact of lower exports was partly offset by current transfers, which include money sent in by Filipinos working overseas. Current transfers grew by 6 percent to 17.6 billion.

Remittances remained strong last year on the back of sustained global demand for Filipino workers.

Meanwhile, the BSP also reported that the country posted a lower surplus in its capital and financial account last year.

The surplus in the capital and financial account, which covers cash flows in the form of portfolio and direct investments, reached $5.2 billion last year, down by 29 percent from the $7.4 billion of the previous year, data showed.

From page B1

DOF expects credit ratings

to the country's improving fiscal situation, its well-managed economy and the good governance drive of the administration as being the main drivers for the country's expected upgrade.

Sovereign debt ratings determine how much a country—both its government and private companies—pays to borrow from investors lenders. The Philippines relies heavily on the offshore debt market to cover its chronic budget deficits, and is the Australia's largest sovereign debt issuer after Japan.

At present, the Philippines is rated by all major debt watchers in two notches below investment grade. The highest level achieved by the country is a notch below investment grade during the Ramos administration.

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO BID
(Procurement of Goods)

1. The Department of National Defense, through the DND-Project Bids and Awards Committee, invites manufacturers/suppliers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

Name of Project	Description	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
1. Office Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Office Supplies	PHP90,540.00
2. Computer Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Computer Supplies	1,213,176.00
3. Janitorial Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Janitorial Supplies	214,500.00
4. Other Supplies	Manufacture, Supply and Delivery of Assorted Other Supplies	3,883,813.34
5. Construction Supplies & Materials	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Construction Supplies and Materials	936,360.00
6. Ammo Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Ammo Supplies	400,000.00
7. Printing & Binding Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Printing and Binding Supplies	703,800.00
8. Vehicle Spare Parts Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Vehicle Spare Parts Supplies	2,737,500.00
9. ICT Parts	Supply and Delivery of Assorted ICT Parts Supplies	1,401,500.00
	GRAND TOTAL	PHP13,971,899.34

2. The schedule of activities are as follows:

ACTIVITIES	VENUE	DATE	TIME
Issuance of Bid Documents	DND-Project BAC Secretariat, Rm 203, 2nd Floor, DND Bldg, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City	March 26, 2012 to April 11, 2012	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	DND BAC Conference Room 2 (Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City	March 28, 2012	10:00 AM
Deadline for Submission/ Opening of Bids	DND BAC Conference Room 2 (Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City	April 11, 2012	10:00 AM
Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184		
Post Qualification			
Issuance of Notice of Award			

3. Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount as indicated below to the DND-Project BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, Room 203, DND Building, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Acquisitions, Installations and Logistics, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Tel No. 911-6823 or Tel/Fax: 911-6824.

Name of Project	Cost of the Documents (in Pesos)
1. Office Supplies	1,000.00
2. Computer Supplies	1,000.00
3. Janitorial Supplies	1,000.00
4. Other Supplies	1,000.00
5. Construction Supplies and Materials	1,000.00
6. Ammo Supplies	1,000.00
7. Printing & Binding	1,000.00
8. Vehicle Spare Parts & Supplies	1,000.00
9. ICT Parts	1,000.00

4. The eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

5. All prospective bidders are encouraged to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility not later than two (2) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids.

6. The DND-Project assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate a indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

7. The DND-Project reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality and award the Contract to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the government as evaluated by the DND Project Bids and Awards Committee (DND-Project BAC).

8. The invitation is also posted in the PHILGEPS website at **www.philgeps.net** and DND website at **www.dnd.gov.ph** in accordance with the revised IRR of R.A. 9184. Further, it shall also be posted at conspicuous places in the premises of the Department of National Defense (DND).

(Sgd.) **ASSISTANT SECRETARY DANILO AUGUSTO S. FRANCIA**
Chairman, DND-Project BAC

Republika ng Pilipinas
PROBINSYA NG LA UNION
La Union Province

BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO BID

The Provincial Government of La Union, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers / manufacturers/ distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	**ASSORTED FOOD COMMODITIES**
Location	Office of the Provincial Governor
Brief Description	Specifications of Assorted Food Commodities: 5,000 packs Assorted Food Commodities
Approved Budget for the Contract	₱3,750,000.00
Contract Duration	120 calendar days
Delivery Period	April 2012

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 3 years, with an amount of at least 50% of the approved project for building, and have key personnel and equipment owned, leased or under purchase/s available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Bidding Forms. Final Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 26, 2012- April 10, 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. at the BAC Office, Provincial Capitol, City of San Fernando, La Union
2. Pre-Bid Conference	April 3, 2012, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room/Session PHQ, Provincial Capitol, City of San Fernando, La Union
3. Opening of Bids	April 16, 2012, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room/Session PHQ, Provincial Capitol, City of San Fernando, La Union
4. Bid Evaluation	April 17, 2012
5. Post-qualification	April 18, 2012
6. Notice of Award	April 19, 2012

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of ₱10,000.00 to the Provincial Treasurer's Cashier.

The Provincial Government of La Union assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **MA. GEOFFREY S. TILAN**
BAC Chairman

Armed Forces and Police Mutual Benefit Association, Inc.

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY TO LEASE DOMESTIC GLOBAL CITY LOT

1. The AFP Mutual Benefit Association, Inc. (AFPMBAI) through its BOD and Awards Committee invites individuals, companies and corporations to apply for pre-qualification for the lease of a real estate property described as follows:

Location	: Lot 1 & 4 Block 38, Bonifacio Global City bounded by 2nd Avenue, 4th Avenue and 27th Street
Total Area	: 3,286 sq.m. (1,643 sq.m. each)
TCT Number	: TCT No. 41318 and 41319
Classification	: Commercial, FAR 12
Minimum Lease Price	: PHP 80/sq. meter / month (net)

Note : Lease proposals shall come from one adjacent lot. Proposal for one (1) lot only is automatically disqualified.

2. Deadline for submission of pre-qualification statements is on 16 April 2012.

3. For the composition of pre-qualification statements, please feel free to visit AFPMBAI, Real Estate Group, 4th Floor, AFPMBAI Building, Col. Bonny Serrano Ave., cor. EDSA, Quezon City or call telephone numbers 911-54-65/911-85-11 and 911-46-31 local 258.

4. The AFPMBAI reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and their respective proposals, postpone, cancel or drop acceptance of proposals, and waive any conditions, terms, procedures in obtaining proposals, intent to lease.

5. AFPMBAI will not recognize real estate brokers or agents with claims for brokerage/agents' commission against AFPMBAI for the lease of the property.

(Sgd.) **COL EDMUNDO F GAMMAD PAF (MT)**
Chairman BoD and Bids & Committee
Per Real Estate Procurement & Development

THE KING GROUP

HR ASSISTANT and RECEPTIONIST

HONG KONG-BASED COMPANY SEEKING FULLTIME WORKER LOCATED IN MAKATI, CBD/3 KOCH AVE., EXT. PHONE #: 631-75-38/E-MAIL TO: kinggroup@hotmail.com

---

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

BUSINESS FOR SALE

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

CONDO/TOWNHOUSE

LOANS

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

BAD DEBTS TO BE SOLD
Sun Rogue,
Santiago Review Inc
Lot Area - 1,000
Floor Area - 500
Email: chalee@yahoo.com
Tel. 631-4567 and be busy

CONDO/TOWNHOUSE

HOUSE & LOT

LOT

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

ROOM & BOARD

CONDO/TOWNHOUSE

LOAN & MORTGAGE

HOUSE

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

CONDO/TOWNHOUSE FOR SALE/RENT

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

WANTED TO BUY

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

BILLBOARD

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CLASSIFIEDS
More Classified Ads
Ilocos Norte Elec. Coop. **A6**
BSP **A14**
Prov'l. Gov't of Misamis **A14**
Tarlac I Elec. Coop **A14**

Affordable Condo in Quezon City

BAYO CONDOTEL
Sucat Executive corner Tuason St., Quezon City

MINI MID-RISE

- Good Location
- Low Price
- Low DP
- Mid-Rise Condo
- Easy Financing

As low as 30% DP to Move-in

799-2155 | 0917-6861494
www.bayocapitalproperties.com

LB (Land Bank) Realty Development Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Warehouses for Rent

Situated at 33 Santan Street, Barangay Fortuna, Bustillos

inside a 6,500 sq.m. compound

warehouses of 330 sqm, 900 sqm, and 1,000 sqm strongly constructed with very high elevation.

Contact 0917-5594636 and landline 631-9185 Mr. Carlos Yao.

Notice of Loss
Bank Certificate

BINAGAY BUILDOBUILDING PROPERTY FOR SALE / JOINT VENTURE

10 mins. walking distance to white beach
Ideal for development
Lot Area: 3,900 sq.m
Interested Buyers ONLY.
Please call call # 0920-2705585

FOR SALE

5 UNITS MILLER WELDING MACHINE DUETS ENGINE 500 AMPS.
AND
3 UNITS CLOSE VAN

585-2978 • 0908-8985748
0917-8974878

LEGAL NOTICE

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
[illegible]

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits.

Name and address of Company/ Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
MELI RESOURCE MINING, INC. 19/F Picadilly Star Bldg., 4th Ave. cor. 27th St., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Tambot Liu Chinese	Chief Administrator
PHIL-WIDO TECH CORP. Rm. 15 Unit 8 SF Nandovia Mercator II Law Phase City	Seo Sung Joo Korean	Sales Coordinator
MELI RESOURCE MINING, INC. 19/F Picadilly Star Bldg., 4th Ave. cor. 27th St., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Tanning Chen Chinese	Sales Researcher
EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF QATAR 23 One World Square Bldg., 7th Upper McKinley Road, McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Elfatih Abdelrahim Sulieman	Secretary
UNIVERSALA HOUSE, INC. Unit Ground Floor Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Chongqing Niu Chinese	Finishing Chef
HAN-MINERVA TAN LTD. Unit 2001-2007 Tower One, Ayala Triangle Bldg., Makati City	Yukio Kobayashi Japanese	Executive Representative Officer
AUSTRALIAN CATERING SERVICES CORPORATION Nichols Catering Agent Nichols Avenue, Road South Super Highway, Merville Site, Parañaque City	Nichols Kingsley Agent Australian	General Manager
ORTIGUAS BPO ASIA CORP. 16/F One Ortigas Corporate Bldg., ADB Ave. cor. Garnet Ave., Ortigas City	Matthew Paul Swinger British	Director for Change Management
ROBERT BOSCH COMMUNICATION CENTER INC. 2/F Tri-Legend Tower, Emilio cor. 3 St. St. Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City	Wang Hao Chinese	Automotive
MELI RESOURCE MINING, INC. 19/F Picadilly Star Bldg., 4th Ave. cor. 27th St., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Cangpo Hong Chinese	Sales Analyst
MELI RESOURCE MINING, INC. 19/F Picadilly Star Bldg., 4th Ave. cor. 27th St., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Dongjing Huang Chinese	Sales Analyst
MELI RESOURCE MINING, INC. 19/F Picadilly Star Bldg., 4th Ave. cor. 27th St., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Zhao Hu Chinese	Assistant Operation Manager
PHIL-WIDO TECH CORP. Rm. 15 Unit 8 SF Nandovia Mercator II Law Phase City	Kyungsun Lee Korean	Sales Representative
PHIL-WIDO TECH CORP. Rm. 15 Unit 8 SF Nandovia Mercator II Law Phase City	Soo Kim Korean	Sales Representative
DHP LOGISTICS PHILS., INC. Unit 1 Home Expo Comp. NAIA Ave. San Dionisio, Parañaque City	Soohwan Kim Korean	Logistic Officer
DHP LOGISTICS PHILS., INC. Unit 1 Home Expo Comp. NAIA Ave. San Dionisio, Parañaque City	Sunghyun Moon Korean	Logistics Analyst
DHP LOGISTICS PHILS., INC. Unit 1 Home Expo Comp. NAIA Ave. San Dionisio, Parañaque City	Hyungsuk Korean	Logistic Officer
MORNING STAR TOUR PLANNERS INC. 2/F 1600 Pedro St cor. J. Nicanor, Makati World	Zhenbao Huang Chinese	Business Development Officer
ALCON LABORATORIES (PHILIPPINES), INC. 2/F Rockwell Business Center, Ortigas Ave., Pasig City	Arturo Sandretto American	General Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned applications please communicate with this Regional Office.

ATTY. ALAN M. MACARIMA-CRUZ
Regional Director

FIRST UNION PLANS, INC RENEWAL OF LICENSE.

First Union Plans, Inc. (FUP) has recently presented the renewal of its Certificate of Registration and License by the Insurance Commission. FUP is a pre-need company established on February 26, 2008 and granted a license as sell by the Securities and Exchange Commission in July of the same year. The company is duly authorized to sell pension plans in the country and is a member of the Philippine Federation of Pre-need Plan Companies, Inc. FUP is an affiliate of UnionBank, among the top universal banks in the country. Photo shown (L-R) Eleonore Sanchez, Pre-Need Division Head, Insurance Commission; Atty. Emmanuel F. Dooc, Commissioner, Insurance Commission; Ramon C. Aquiatan, Presidente, First Union Plans; Marie A. C. Pizano, Operation Head, First Union Plans; and Christian A. Peñaflo, Business Manager

looking for a job?
[illegible]

PhilHealth

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION

March 12, 2012

JOINT CIRCULAR
No. 2012-0002

FOR : Officials of the Department of Health, the Department of Budget and Management and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation and All Others Concerned

SUBJECT : Guidelines on the Implementation of Special Provision (SP) No. 11 on National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) for Indigents, Department of Health (DOH) under Republic Act (RA) No. 10147, the FY 2011 General Appropriations Act (GAA)

I.0 Background

1.1 The poorest Filipino families have traditionally not been able to access quality healthcare services due to their inability to pay for high out-of-pocket expenses, with government subsidies and the NHIP as tangible basis for the 5th point of healthcare.

1.2 Leveraging Partnership (KP) seeks to improve the health of the poorest 40 percent segment of the population through its three strategic thrusts: (i) improve the sensitivity, health facilities enhancements, and attainment of health-related MDGs.

1.3 The full KP strategic thrust of financial risk protection is meant to lessen the financial burden to care or high OOP costs by substantially increasing the contribution of the Government as a source of total national health expenditure through the expansion of NHIP coverage and increases in benefit spending. It will be implemented by:

1.3.1 Enrollment of the 4th poorest poorest families in the Government's Program of the NHIP;

1.3.2 Provision to beneficiaries of adequate, meaningful, satisfactory ensuring that families have low to access benefits, which is on its out-patient and in-patient benefits, and how to avail of support;

1.3.3 Provision of effective out-patient services at NHIP-accredited facilities through Outreach; and

1.3.4 Provision of effective in-patient services in public hospitals where NHIP-approved members will have zero co-payment for covered services.

1.4 The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) adopted the principle of pooling of funds under the Philhealth Fund for Indigent Care in its Board Resolution (BR) No. 1467, s. 2010.

1.5 The National Health Insurance Act (NHIA) provides that all citizens of the Philippines shall be covered by the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP). In accordance with this principle of universality and compulsory coverage:

1.5.1 Section 29 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. No. 7875, as amended, provides that the premium subsidy of the indigents shall be identified by the National Government (NG) and the Local Government Units (LGUs) using the Sponsored Program (SP) component of the NHIP;

1.5.2 1.25 million additional indigent families identified in terms of 1.00 million families identified in the Listahanan of the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) of DSWD.

1.5.3 In addition, PhilHealth has been providing automatic eligibility to sponsored members listed in the NHTS-PR every year to distribution of IDs and remittance of IHC membership premiums.

1.6 The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) was directed to implement the NHTS-PR, a results-based tool that will identify the families to be the beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilya Program (4Ps).

1.7 The implementation of Special Provision No. 11 under R.A. No. 10147, quoted below, is subject to guidelines to be issued jointly by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), DOH and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth):

> "11. National Health Insurance Program for the Indigents. Of the amounts appropriated under A.O.(1), Three Billion Pesos (P3,000,000,000) shall constitute National Government (NG) counterpart for the Health Insurance of indigents under the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR)."

PROVIDED, That such subsidy shall be released to PhilHealth through the BTR, upon certification by the PhilHealth Chief Executive that the LGU share in the premium has already been paid together with the corresponding portion of indigent beneficiaries identified by the LGU counterpart as provided in the Special Budget pursuant to Section 65, Chapter 5 (Book V) of E.O. No. 292, and such other reports and financial statements that may be required by the DBM;

The implementation of the provision shall be subject to guidelines to be jointly issued by the DBM, DOH and PhilHealth;

The DOH shall post on its official website, at least on a quarterly basis, the list of indigent beneficiaries and amount of premium subsidy, utilization of amounts, status of implementation and progress evaluation and/or assessment reports. The Secretary of Health shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with this requirement.

1.8 Of the 4th to 5th SP, the poorest households under the NHTS-PR of the DSWD as of 28 February 2011 were 2.4% or 1,143,673 families were currently mandated as automatic existing lists of indigent families under the Sponsored Program of the NHIP. As published 2.38 million families identified in Memorandum have been later identified during validation.

1.9 There is the to facilitate the eventual compliance of the citizens mandated by the NHIA, the Philhealth Board Resolution (PBR) No. 1475 dated 27 January 2010 allowing 1.00 to 1.5 million of the 5th SP of the DSWD those who are not currently enrolled in the Sponsored Program for 2010, whereby PhilHealth shall be accepting the total government counterpart premium rate for CY 2011 as a temporary mandatory measure, quoted hereunder:

> WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, the BOARD RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to approve the amending Local Government Code to avoid indigent families under the NHTS-PR of the DSWD under the Sponsored Program as of end-December 2010 premium counterpart contribution premium rate for calendar year 2011;
>
> RESOLVED FURTHER, as additional allowing the Local Government Units/Sponsors to remain in calendar year 2011 existing indigent beneficiaries enrolled in calendar year 2010 and not listed under the NHTS-PR of the DSWD under the Sponsored Program notwithstanding said families local government counterpart contribution shall be assumed by the Corporation;
>
> and, FINALLY, health insurance coverage can be promptly provided to indigent families not yet enrolled in the Sponsored Program of the DSWD, the Corporation may implement a coverage of Philhealth Circular No. 0012, s. 2010 whereby indigent families not yet enrolled in the Sponsored Program shall be entitled to avail of the benefits under the Philhealth Z Benefit Package.

II.0 Purpose

This Joint Circular provides implementation guidelines for Special Provision No. 11 of the FY 2011 General Appropriations Act (GAA), Health Care Assistance under the Department of Health (DOH), Office of the Secretary, representing National Government counterpart for the premium contributions of indigent families enrolled in the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) in accordance with the statutory sharing scheme between the National Government (NG) and the Local Government Units (LGUs).

It also recognizes that enrollment into the Sponsored Program of the NHIP should be accompanied by improved membership services in addition to non-medical interventions to increase enrollment of quality in-patient and out-patient services at PhilHealth-accredited facilities as means to raise the Benefit Delivery Ratio (BDR).

III.0 Coverage

This Joint Circular applies to all officials of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Department of Health (DOH), including attached agencies. It also applies to all officials and units of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) being an attached agency of the DOH.

IV.0 Guidelines

4.1 Pursuant to R.A. No. 10147, the FY 2011 GAA, the amount appropriated as subsidy for health insurance premium of indigent families enrolled in the NHIP is P3,000,000,000.

4.2 The NHIA is the set of rules (RIRR) shall be used as the basis for the application of the national government share of the health insurance premium of indigent families and which shall also be in accordance with the PhilHealth Charter and the FY 2011 GAA.

4.3 Immediately appropriated for indigent families shall be released to PhilHealth through the Bureau of Treasury (BTR), the NG counterpart premium subsidy based on the DSWD NHTS-PR certified list of enrolled indigents.

4.4 Thereafter, the Secretary, be responsible for ensuring compliance of this provision/special requirements by issuing specific guidelines deemed necessary to operationalize this joint circular.

V.0 Department of Budget and Management shall:

5.1.1 Based on the actual filings, as certified by the PhilHealth Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the NG counterpart shall be released through the Bureau of Treasury (BTR), the NG counterpart premium subsidy based on the DSWD NHTS-PR certified list of enrolled indigents;

5.1.2 Release the subsidy subject to cash programming, availability of funds, accounting and other agreed-upon laws, rules and regulations.

5.1.3 Require PhilHealth to submit reports and financial statements necessary for the release of funds.

VI.0 Governing Clause

Issues arising from the implementation of this Joint Circular shall be resolved jointly by DBM, DOH and PhilHealth.

VII.0 Separability Clause

In the event that any provision or part of this joint circular is declared unconstitutional or invalid by any Court of law or competent authority, those provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain valid and effective.

VIII.0 Effectivity

This Joint Circular shall take effect immediately.

FLORENCIO B. ABAD
Secretary
Department of Budget and Management

MANUEL M. DAYRIT, MD
Secretary
Department of Health

By:

EDUARDO C. MANDEIN, MD
President and CEO
Philippine Health Insurance Corporation

---

1 "Philippine Health Agenda to achieve Universal Health Care (UHC) published by DOH MCHAs, 2010-2020.

2 R.A. No. 7875, as amended.

DTR – March 24, 2012

BUSINESS

Inflation seen to settle at 2.2%-3.1% in March

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE RATE of increase in consumer prices is estimated to have settled between 2.2 and 3.1 percent in March.

This will bring the average inflation in the first quarter to a range of 2.9 to 3.2 percent, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Inflation in February hit 2.7 percent, while the rate in March last year was 4.3 percent.

The BSP said inflation would likely remain benign and stay well within the official projection of 3 to 5 percent for the full year.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said inflation in March would depend on how the slowdown in the prices of vegetables and reduced utility rates would offset overall consumer prices, given the impact of higher oil prices and a weaker peso.

The Philippines is vulnerable to spikes in oil prices due to its heavy dependence on fuel imports.

Also, the depreciation of the peso makes imported goods costly in local currency terms, making turnover in overall prices.

The peso, which stayed within the 43-to-a-dollar territory in February, broke to the 43 level in March as external concerns, such as the economic slowdown in China and potential disruptions in oil supply, dampened risk appetite of portfolio investors for assets from emerging economies like the Philippines.

Tetangco said that the BSP believed that the existing monetary policy stance remained appropriate.

"The BSP will continue to closely monitor developments to see if there would result in further second-round effects. We are satisfied now there would not be effect in the path of inflation over the policy horizon, the assessment of which will be a primal consideration in setting policy moving forward," Tetangco said.

"Second round effects" refer to additional risks arising from initial inflationary pressures, for instance, a spike in global oil prices, which may result in a similar hike in local pump prices, may cause the prices of other goods to increase.

TETANGCO

Lopezes, partner seek ICC arbitration

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LOPEZ group and Toronto-based power firm Hopewell Holdings Ltd. are at odds over their fledgling coal-to-water-filling partnership and have sought international arbitration to probe alleged contract violations.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Friday, the Lopez-led First Philippine Holdings Corp. said First PV Mariveles Corp. (First PV) and First Philec Mariveles Corp. (FPMC) had filed a request for arbitration of their dispute with Hopewell with the International Chamber of Commerce.

"Both FPMC and Hopewell are developing branches by the other party of various water filling supply and services agreement," the company said. "First PV is joining the arbitration as a party to protect its rights under the joint venture agreement with Hopewell."

FPMC has sought arbitration in order to enforce its rights under the agreement, including the payment of unpaid sums of money by Hopewell, and for such other relief as the arbitration tribunal shall deem appropriate," the disclosure said.

FPMC is a joint venture established last year by First PV and Hopewell to offer silicon wafers for the Korean firm.

First PV is a wholly-owned subsidiary of First Philippine Holdings Corp., which is PDS: manufacturing subsidiary First PV holds a 70-percent stake in the venture while the remaining 30 percent is owned by the Korean partner.

The $100-million joint venture put up an initial 400-megawatt solar wafer-slicing plant in the Philippines. The newly-constructed FPMC plant was inaugurated in December last year in First Philippine Industrial Park in Tanauan, Batangas. The new plant has capability to slice for both the monocrystalline and multicrystalline segment.

German companies urged to invest in PH

By Amy R. Remo

THE PHILIPPINE government is urging German investors to tap their already its markets and consider the Philippines as alternative source of imports and a haven for fresh investments.

In a statement, Philippine ambassador to Germany Maria Cleofe Natividad said the government was working to establishing deeper economic linkages with Germany, which must also position itself for the eventual formation of the Asean economic **market by 2015, when members** countries will break down the remaining tariff and non-tariff barriers between each other.

According to Natividad, the target of German businesses are small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are mostly family-owned.

Natividad said four German economy summits led the "2012 Years Philippines-Germany," composed of German business leaders and representatives who visited the country recently to explore possible business opportunities here.

Natividad said the "group's experience here so far has been educational and awakening for the Germans, some of whom are in the Philippines for the first time. Its experience has driven the actual conditions and investment potentials in the country as well as to furnish networks with business stakeholders from the government and the private sector."

For today "the unwavering support of the German group (to the Philippines), despite the difficulties and challenges they (encountered) face."

In the meantime, the German **business delegation was expected,** is inspired by President Aquino's "sincerity to effect the necessary reforms that will make the country more investment-worthy thus preventing past mistakes from happening again, including the controversial Project 1000 that has affected for a while relations between both countries."

The German visiting group was likewise impressed with the investor-accomplishments of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority under Director General Lilia B. De Lima, who gave a presentation in a gathering with Schoch once the Washington body.

Benguet nets ₱1.38B

BENGUET Corp. reported a net profit of P1.380 billion last year, or triple most prior, boosted core operations while one-time gains added to the bottomline, which has been positive for the second straight year.

Last year's net profit, however, marked a decline from the P2.4 billion in net income posted in 2010, when the company booked extraordinary earnings of P2.3 billion from the settlement of liabilities and investments of Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines Inc., provided closely and recurring income base last year while global metal prices remained high.

To date, the company has successfully retired 84 percent of its debt obligations and is continuously working on the full settlement of its liabilities this year.

For 2011, the company booked consolidated gross of P1.21 billion. At the same time, its revenue from operations surged by 208 percent to P262 million.

Revenue from gold increased by 30 percent year-on-year which the company expects to continue growing as milling capacity is increased to 800 metric tons per day by the fourth quarter of 2012. — Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Mangosong

Strength in numbers for aggravated condo buyers

A PRUDENT condo unit buyer should double check with HLURB regarding developer's reputation and the proposed master plan of the entire development.

Text and photos by Tonee R. Salazar

THE CUSTOMER is king. That maxim applies not only in the trade of goods and services but also in the real estate business, particularly in the buying and selling of condominium units.

David Lerchin, country head of Jones Lang LaSalle Lerchin, advises condominium buyers who are unhappy with their payment situation to practice "plenty of due diligence" when filing complaints against developers and their selling agents. Fortunately, he says there are many public forums today which are on the side of legitimate complainants.

The Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, he points out, would be able to help if it will provide a public service by publishing the complaints on developers' projects. And unless developers threaten to sue in return, Lerchin says a class action suit of buyers with similar complaints would be a stronger option.

False claims

Lerchin says false claims (of developers) will need to be proven and the HLURB has enough policies and regulations to protect buyers to claim.

"The other route is to go high up the organizations to voice issues and many times developers will settle rather than risk having disgruntled buyers," Lerchin adds.

Inquirer Property has checked the HLURB website (http://www.hlurb.gov.ph/). It has an online folder for "services" for buyers' guide, rights, how to file a complaint, developers' guide, responsibilities, obligations and other related issues, updates on LGUs, frequently asked questions and other homebuyers' concerns.

It also has an online forum for complaints as well as master list of developers and their addresses. It also includes the phone number and e-mail address of the Legal Affairs Group.

HLURB legal officer Mike Dennis told Inquirer Property over the phone that HLURB would not know of pre-selling (problems) involving any developer until a complaint surfaces. He confirmed that there are developers doing presselling, as projects that have not been registered yet.

An Inquirer Property reader a few weeks ago commented: "There's poor regulatory enforcement by HLURB over other government agencies." The reader cited that "in presselling should be the rule, unless the project is at least 60 percent complete." The reader went on to say that "as it is, the delay in the delivery of the units and the documentary proof of ownership is the common practice by many developers." This reader added that one should "stay away from developers whose name are in the project's proximity to malls."

Appropriate agency

Michael Soriano, Annex projects director for real estate and senior adviser for Pitog+Hontanosas Business Advisory, agrees that the appropriate agency to address buyer and homeowner grievances would be the HLURB. "With the passage of the Real Estate Service Act Law, regulatory removal of erring agents will now be under the jurisdiction of the Board."

Elam Ali Cardero Jr., Jones Lang LaSalle Lerchin's head of research, consulting and valuation, says, "Ideally the HLURB should have full control on the strict compliance of the developers with their suggested construction schedule and deliverables."

Cardero adds that "a prudent buyer should double-check with HLURB regarding the reputation of the developer, and the proposed master plan of the entire development."

He explains: "It would also help if the buyer would check with relevant authorities regarding updated Land Use Plans and other plans for developments in the area that would have favorable and deteriorating effects to their developments."

Cardero clarifies that there are a number of reputable developers who deliver on their promised units in a timely manner, along with the proper documentation on the proof of ownership (i.e., transfer of titles).

Soriano says, "As a general rule, buyers must make sure representations made by agents and the marketing collaterals presented must be duly acknowledged and validated by their superiors."

"There are instances where collaterals are made through the initiatives of the sales agents and without the clearance of the developer. When necessary, certifications may be requested from the developer attesting to the truthfulness of the marketing promise."

Soriano says, "While the bureaucracy and the volume of work in HLURB, I have reservations if they can provide answers in real time. In this end, verification of claims is still the buyers' primary responsibility."

Artists' lost haven rediscovered

(first of two parts)

Text and photos by Charles E. Bukot

THE IDEA that it was the late national artist for architecture, Leandro V. Locsin, who was behind the creation of this place should already elicit awe and wonder.

"Unknown to most, including those in the arts and culture community, the Artists' Village has been a haven to a number of artists, theologians and scholars from all over the world," explains Fr. Francisco Feliciano, composer and former resident conductor of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra who helped found the artists' Village site known as Sandikbukan.

An expansive yet shadow amphitheater—that serves as a gathering place—lies in the middle of flat one-and-a-half-hectare property owned by the Episcopal Church in the Philippines located a few hundred meters behind Trinity University of Asia in Quezon City and bounded by Gilmore Greek).

GATHERING as a gathering place, the mysterious yet shallow amphitheater is the Artists' Village's centerpiece.

FELICIANO, lounging in one of the resident artist's houses (now occupied by Province) explains that the Artists' Village is a place designed to enhance one's creativity.

Well-sheltered

Being nestled deep in the property of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines and the fact that it is surrounded by mature trees, hence the Artists' Village with a quiet and secluded environment.

"Here, one is transported back to an older, more simple time. The Artists' Village creates a simple, rustic ambience," describes Emmanuel Rao Perrucio, a journalist-artist who lives in one of the houses.

Perrucio says Locsin designed each house to be simple as well as representative to what a traditional Filipino home should be—tiny tiles for the roof, capiz shells on windows, hardwood as table and on the walls and flooring.

Documenting a number of these houses is an elevated concrete walkway. There was a time when they are made of wood and bamboo, but after the roof are incredible rain-drum walkways quenched from Vigan, Ilocos Sur.

Bigas-inspired houses

Perrucio added that since most of the artists who designed and built the place all hail from the provinces of the Cordillera mountain range, the structures that were put in place of the Artists' Village were all inspired by the traditional architecture found in Bigas and the Mountain Province: the silk houses from the "hale" of Bigas, and the terraced performances circle from the rice terraces of Banaue and Ifugao.

Such designs not only preserve the aesthetic value of these place but these value also present resilience from rain and against inclement weather.

"Locsin should be commended for his foresight to use stilts to elevate the houses because when Tropical Storm 'Ondoy' struck in 2009, the water from the creek was so high it reached the second flight of the stairs leading to the loft area, which is already over 3 meters from the ground," Perrucio relates.

Upon entering one of the houses one would be reminded of being inside a traditional Bahay Kubo: there's the bedroom which is very large, open, multipurpose room for evening guests, a living quarters or in the case of Perrucio, his painting studio. Each house has a balcony which could be accessed via a sliding door with borders of wood and Capiz finish.

"I just open my windows, look around and in a short while, I am already inspired to start another round of painting," Perrucio says.

While Locsin took care of designing the houses, Feliciano on the other hand, did some of the the landscaping of the Artists' Village.

"The amphitheater serves as a focal point for artists, musicians, writers and liturgists. Here we are able to pursue our creative work in expressions of our faith. Here we form a creative environment where the arts are respected as an important aspect of health and healing," Perrucio explains.

Resort-style condo

In fact, the late Locsin intended to have a resort-style oasis that he even planned a 9-meter deep fishing lagoon in the northeast corner of the property to complete the cultural ambiance of the Artists' Village. "But that part has to be momentarily abandoned, especially once the water could be a source of dengue outbreak and the last thing someone might get drowned," Perrucio says.

As the place observes its 20th year, the Episcopal Church in the Philippines is hoping to revive the glory of the Artists' Village. "It has been transformed more than plans over a lot of residents. Most of the houses are occupied because they all need to be repaired," reports Perrucio who believes that the sanctuary is one place that deserves much attention because it's the only one of its kind located in Metro Manila.

The project would be the National Arts Center in Mount Makiling, Los Baños, Laguna.

"Emerging and established artists needs a haven and the Artists' Village is one perfect place that pays homage to the vibrant arts and culture of the Philippines," Perrucio says. (Next: Restoring artists' houses)

Cultural planning

CULTURAL PLANNING is the strategic and integrated planning and use of cultural resources for economic and community development. Above is the Vigan Cathedral area.

EVER YOU were wondered what would happen on the rare states of our historically important houses, buildings and monuments are being destroyed, vandalized and demolished? We will soon be saying our knees of our cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage is defined as the legacy of tangible and intangible attributes of a people inherited from past generations and maintained for future generations. It may include monuments, buildings, landscapes, art works as well as traditions, language and knowledge.

Preserving cultural heritage

Without our cultural heritage we lose our most basic identity as a people and as a nation. Cultural heritage is what distinguishes one nation from another. It is this diversity that makes our world interesting.

As mentioned in previous articles, the movement of human population to cities that look similar to many ways because of globalization, has spurred creative thinking inside the city to study ways to solve the increasingly opposite problems of cultural degradation.

One possible solution is Cultural Planning discussed recently in a lecture sponsored by the School of Urban and Regional Planning of the University of the Philippines.

GREEN ARCHITECTURE

Amando
de Jesus

Cultural planning

Jeff Evenson, principal, consultant at the Canadian Urban Institute spoke about municipal cultural planning, defined by the government of Ontario as "a municipal government-led process approved by council, for identifying a community's cultural resources, strengthening the management of those resources and integrating those cultural resources across all facets of local government planning and decision-making."

Cultural planning is the strategic and integrated planning and use of cultural resources for economic and community development. The municipality integrates culture in plans and policies in collaboration with the community including the residents and business partners.

The 21st century is environmental. It conscious and this will affect public policy, quality of life, quality of place and social justice.

Whereas before we thought that people follow business and investment. Now developers build communities where people want to live and work, and business and investment will follow people.

Cultural mapping identifies cultural resources. This lays the ground work for place specificity that addresses differentiation and enhances value. We could make responsible use of nature, structures, local materials and experiences as a source for efficient ecologic aesthetic motivation.

The creation of wealth from local and creative economic activity can serve as stimuli for more creative and innovative.

The Local Government Support Program for Local Economic Development under the Department of Interior and Local Government or DILG is a collaborative program between the government of Canada and the Philippines to reduce poverty by strengthening local governance and supporting sustainable local economic development.

While creating sustainable, livable and attractive communities, and encouraging product innovation, the program helps restore and preserve the physical environment.

Preservation and promotion of cultural of local communities creates a sense of ownership and pride in the public realm. It engages the youth in positive leisure activities, and diversifies and enhances economic development opportunities, personal economic development through job creation, retail activity and increased property values.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amando@yahoo.com

More guidelines on furnishing your rental condo unit

STYLISH: Get a seat for the dreamy and legs of these dining chairs and their dining table. These are the pure, dust-free looked and bumped office. Pick-it-yourself pieces are quite popular and accessible, and surprisingly affordable.

DUE TO the popular demand on last week's subject, I'm adding a few suggestions to my list of guidelines on practical ways to furnish your condo unit—this time leaning toward functional and maintenance.

Furnishings in condo units can wear out fast, most especially when the unit is being leased out. One can only hope for a careful and considerate tenant who will value and appreciate all the furnishings you have put inside. Often times being hospital, you can look into making your rental unit resilient and trouble free.

1 **Use fixed materials for tabletops and countertops.** Hardwood tops is the number one but hardwood so they'll likely to loosen up by the time you're ready to take it another tenant. Having to refurbish stained/varnished tables is troublesome, and removing it so to unglued none will be difficult, especially if you damaged with deep scratches. Glass tops are easier to maintain and also easier to replace when they break. Stained wood is ideal because of its elegance, but even solid surface material like tiles of Corian will do, especially if your unit has a big-and-modern theme.

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Berenguer

Associate

2 **Look for neutral-hue frames and legs of furniture.** Basic neutrals like white, grey, tan get locked and bumped often. Metal framed pieces are quite popular and accessible, and surprisingly affordable.

3 **Use commercial grade fabrics.** They don't stain as quick. Try an fabric made purely from natural fiber, which is usually used for residential grade fabrics. They are easier to wash or shampoo, and their fibers aren't easily trap. Look for how the number of "rubs" the fabric can withstand. (this is a standard test for fabrics and your supplier should be able to give you that info. For instance, a fabric with 20,000 to 40,000 is good enough for your purpose. Commercial grade fabrics also are usually fire retardant—a safety feature not appreciated in the rest of resident couches and upholstered pieces.

4 **Opt for CFL (compact fluorescent lighting) or LED (light emitting diode) lighting over incandescent or halogen** Incandescent is already being phased out in many other countries due to its high power consumption. Some goes with halogen, which on top of high consumption, also produces a lot of heat. The ideal would be to use LED lights, which are the most environmentally friendly source of light; a 7-watt LED bulb will give you as much lumen brightness as a 50-watt halogen bulb.

5 **Use fixed shower heads and spouts.** Handheld shower heads may be helpful when bathing but way impractical to maintain. The exposed flexible pipes eventually become filthy and even ejects the parts. The rods they are hanged on or clipped into allowing for adjustments in height, eventually loosen and cause the shower heads to slip down.

6 **Material can be quite deceiving as different metals—stainless steel, aluminum and chromed solid steel—look similar.** Sometimes even the sales people in the shops don't know the difference. When buying, look first at those made of stainless steel, as this will not rust nor corrode from all the lush amounts chemicals. Yes, they're more expensive, but they will last your unit's lifetime. Chrome-solid is a next option as they are easy to clean. Aluminum will eventually corrode with the chemicals, and likely, costs than is decreased price will look the pieces with fixed parts because they are not solid (inside-out, but are also easy to safety clean glass shelves, soap dishes or glass tops on units tend to get hot and tepid.

7 **Repaint your walls in a subtle finish.** Semi-gloss finishes are look tacky because they will show all the imperfections. A matte or flat finish tend to hide, but it will require all the flat. Like making a bath put semi-gloss latex paint to a half part the paint to achieve a "satiny" finish—enough sheen to clean after, but subtle enough to hide wall imperfections. It is also softer on the eyes. While at it, change your wall color so you can avoid cool and have a different place to an against other sensible units that kept their walls in the as-delivered paint finish and color.

Contact the author through designisabel@yahoo.com or through our Associate Berenguer Facebook account.

LIVINGSTONE will be the first residential building in the world to bear the colorful mark of the Missonihome.

CENTURY Properties officials Bobbie and Myra Antonio with the members of the Missoni and Jabrini family: Jeff, Rosita Missoni; MISSONIHOME creative director, Tand J Pedar creative director Wanda Jabrini and Missoni shareholder Vittorio Missoni.

Rich, colorful living experience awaits at Acqua Livingstone

By Theresa L. Samaniego

IT HAS always been about going beyond limits, dreams and perhaps, even one's wildest imagination.

After all, bringing together different personalities and signature global brands under one roof to provide that authentic touch of luxury in every property development, definitely takes an ingenious mind and a leap of faith as well.

So after Donald Trump, Paris Hilton and Versace, Century Properties is again marking a first not only in the Philippines, but in the global scene as well. It has partnered with Missonihome for the 52-storey Acqua Livingstone tower, the fourth of six condominium towers within the P13.5 billion Acqua Private Residences project.

According to Century Properties, this will be the first residential building in the world to bear the colorful mark of the Missoni family, a creative extension of the Italian Missoni aesthetic in furniture, home accessories and interior design.

Rich, colorful experience

The Acqua Livingstone tower, the company adds, will provide residents with a rich and colorful experience that can be had from a Missonihome designed space, which is not available elsewhere except in the Missoni-branded hotels in Edinburgh and Kuwait.

"As a conscious industry innovator, Century Properties has entered the small, choice of different global brands to collaborate for its developments. Missoni Home is a proud addition to this roster," says Century Properties managing director Bobbie Antonio, who is in charge of the company's international brand collaborations.

"This is a testament to Missoni's strong belief in the prospects of the Philippines as a premiere development platform. This pushes the boundaries of Philippine real estate and makes esteemed brands like Missoni Home accessible as a lifestyle experience," Bobbie adds.

Missoni Home

Missoni, founded in 1953 as a knitwear label in Italy by Ottavio and Rosita Missoni, grew into a fashion empire run by three generations of the Missoni family and has since been globally recognized for its unique interpretation of patterns and colors.

It was in 1996 that Rosita Missoni, after passing on the fashion reins to daughter Angela, focused on designing for Missoni Home.

"Missoni Home is known for creating its own style that reflects a combination of life. Our brand is an experience of happiness, excitement, beauty, creativity, of grand elegance. We are inspired by the seasons of nature and we play with color because life is more beautiful with color," says Vittorio Missoni, marketing director and shareholder of Missoni S.p.A.

Tower's design

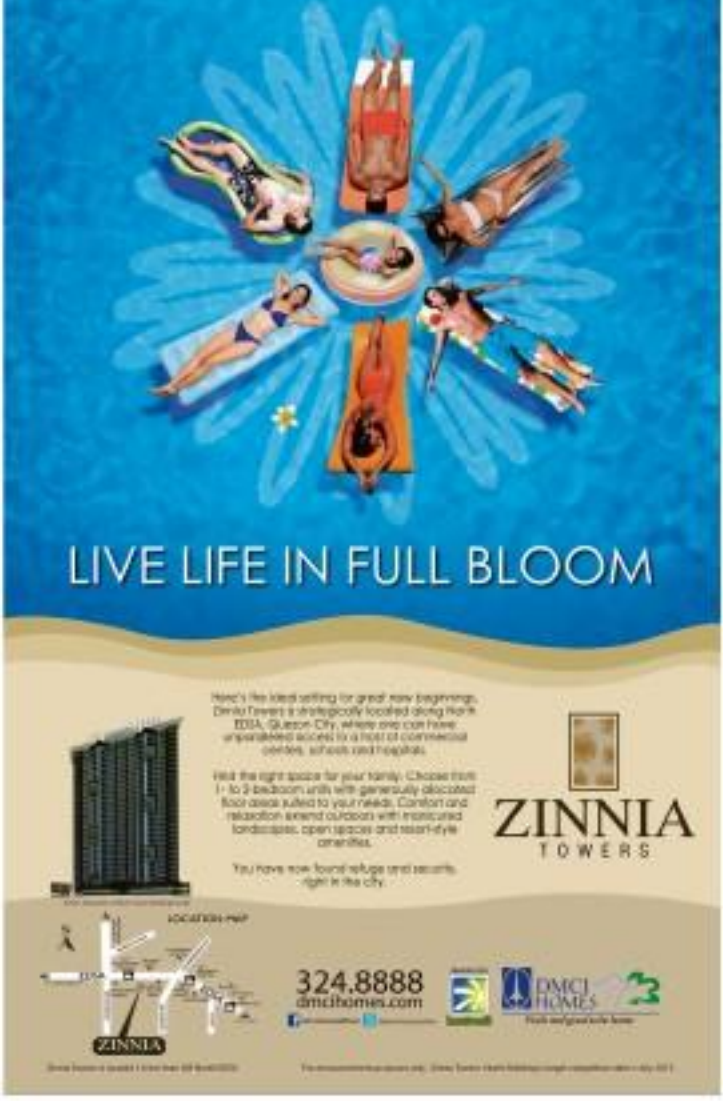
Marvi Antonio, managing director and project head of Century Properties assures, while patents say the tower's design highlights bold colors and energetic forms in the lobbies, hallways and even elevators, surrounded by signature arresting patterns. The multilevel amenity area called The Canopy, located at the building's sky deck, serves as the pinnacle of Missoni Home's design impress.

The Canopy's lower level will house functions rooms, business center, an indoor and outdoor gym, jacuzzi, a library and spa. The upper level would be a social space dedicated to socialization and entertainment with an amphitheater, lounge, DJ booth and dance floor, pool with swim up bar, and barbecue facilities. Residents would also have that option to enjoy surrounding views as enjoy a meal in the open-air dining area by the Pasig River.

Aside from these amenities, Acqua Livingstone residents will also enjoy the tropical residences infused design of the entire masterplanned development.

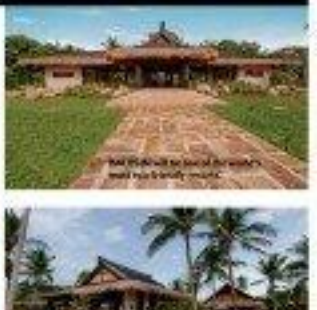
Touted as the Philippines' first residential edict, Acqua Private Residences is located in Bonifacio Global City and is connected to the financial capital of Makati City via the new Lawton-Fort Bonifacio Bridge.

FOR YOUR CEMENT NEEDS



SUMMER GETAWAY

BALESIN provides members a unique, luxurious and exclusive island experience.


Bali Hai Hotel will be one of the resort's most eye-friendly resorts.

BALESIN Village exhibits the country's wealth of natural beauty and indigenous architecture.

Exotic island set to charm, spoil guests

By Theresa S. Sarmiento

SUMMER IN an exotic island? It's definitely more fun in the Philippines. Especially if you end up spending it at the opulent, all-exclusive and members-only Alphaland Balesin Island Club in Quezon province.

Located about 33 kilometers off the eastern coast of Luzon, this 500-hectare island paradise used to serve as a frequent stop for treasure hunters centuries ago, and even became a mansion getaway for the Japanese after their occupation of the Philippines during World War II.

But forward to today, however, Balesin Island is now being redefined and transformed by upscale property developer Alphaland Corp. the way exclusive vacational destination developers should be—as a world-class destination resort to accommodate all sorts of indulgences.

"At Balesin we aim to provide members with a unique, luxurious and exclusive island experience. With all its natural wonders, it's a world-class itself, giving you that sense of remoteness and serenity. Yet, it's just a quick flight to and from Manila," says Michelle Dugenio, Alphaland SVP for corporate communications.

A true symbol of the high life, Balesin provides unparalleled pampering to its members from start to finish.

First, the trip to the island begins at the private hangar of Alphaland, where guests are accorded the privilege to use the 10 seater state-of-the-art Cessna Grand Caravan.

Luxury becomes even more evident as one starts to descend on Balesin's 1,500-meter long runway and gets an unexplained view of the island's unmatched, or should I say, unspoiled natural beauty.

With its authentically designed villages taking inspiration from the world's famous and picturesque vacation destinations in Europe and Asia, Balesin club members will definitely have something new to explore and look forward to every time they visit the island.

A luxury resort destinations

Currently, Alphaland Balesin Island Club is the only recreational destination in the Philippines to provide its world-class luxury resort destinations within one small island.

• Balesin Village exhibits the Philippines' wealth of natural beauty and indigenous architecture—indeed, a Filipino's home away from home.

The village offers 48 destination villas nestled majestically beneath the mahogany, ipil and the agarbo spurs canopy.

• Bali Village, which also offers 48 destination villas, replicates the stunning landscapes of Bali, Indonesia, through the use of traditional building materials and elements interspersed by means of tropical landscape settings, generous open spaces, courtyards with wooden decks, swimming pools and water features. The Bali development faces the majestic Sierra Madre Mountain range on the Luzon mainland.

• Mykonian Village is unmistakable a vision in white and blue. It can draw you in with its white-washed houses, blue windows and doors, narrow, winding streets, and quaint restaurants and cafés, reminiscent of charming Greece. With 48 destination villas, guests are treated to a taste of Greece in the Philippines, complete with a Greek café should you have a craving for ouzo(licorice aperitif).

WITH ALL its natural wonders, Balesin is a world-class itself.

• Costa Serenidad Village, as its name aptly suggests, presents guests with a 40-cabin resort reminiscent of the world-class resort destination in Northern Andalusia, which has been attracting A-list celebrities, business leaders and other affluent visitors.

Balesin Club's most rendition of this coastal getaway brings luxury comforts without marring the beauty of nature.

• St. Tropez Village memorable gives a taste of France through the club's 48 destination suites styled with St. Tropez chic and inspired by the world famous Spider Hotel.

• Phuket Village, on the other hand, has been situated atop rugged cliffs at the southernmost point of the island, allowing guests to have a stunning view of crystalline blue waters from their guest houses.

Yacht village has been meticulously designed and constructed to resemble the destination it's patterned after, and with the authentic cuisine that you can feast on in each village, you will feel as if you're traveling around the world as you explore the island," says Balesin project director Marco Dato.

"Each village is unique, but what they do have in common are the five-star amenities in the villas, including jacuzzis, indoor and outdoor luxury beds and landscaped pools. There is also wide WiFi access in Balesin, direct-to-home TV via Cignal TV, as well as our very own Smart 3G cell site," he adds.

Ideal playground

Add to that, the island's fully equipped recreational facilities make it an ideal playground for both kids and adults. The many adventurous members can indulge in surfing and kiteboarding while on the Pacific side of Balesin, as the rolling waves and winds provide an excellent venue for these activities. Balesin also offers horseback riding as an alternative to exploring the island by foot.

Noteworthy also is the developer's effort to ensure that Balesin will be one of the world's most eco-friendly resorts.

Dato stresses that Balesin has been masterfully planned and engineered, with sustainability being a key design focus.

"Over 90 percent of Balesin is untouched and preserved, and we intend to keep it that way. We encourage the members to explore and trek the various nature trails to see the environment," Dato claims.

Natural beauty

Since only 10 percent of the island will be developed, members are thus assured that the natural beauty of the island will be kept in its splendor.

And as part of its sustainability thrust, Balesin would not allow cars anywhere on the island except for electric golf carts and an all-eco-friendly transportation.

Water harvesting and proper sewage treatment—with 80 percent water recycling—will also be practiced and organic gardens will be situated in the island.

"Sustainability is one of the primary development philosophies of Alphaland, and this is true for Balesin as well as new developments projects which are LEED-certified," Dinggin says.

"At Balesin, we want to give you a place that has it all—members of nature, the luxuries of first class living, and the most enjoyable activities—while ensuring that the place can be there for many more generations to enjoy," she further says.

Owners and future members of Alphaland Balesin Island Club are entitled to 14 complimentary villa nights a year, along with subsidized flights to and from the island via a chartered flight.

In the center of an island paradise, on a budget

Text and photos by Tonyo B. Salayar

WHEN YOU'RE caught between an airport and an island paradise, where do you go? Two hotels serve as pleasant surprises for tourists in Kalibo, Aklan, and the island paradise of Boracay. They're just over 70 kilometers apart, but are strategically located, unique, totally laid out and affordable.

The Marcian Hotel in Kalibo is only enough to find. It's just a halfway from the Kalibo International Airport, and for mad-bound tourists starting the last trip from the Caticlan Jetty Port in Iloilo via Kalibo, it's a convenient stop to spend the night over.

Sprawled on its 12,130-square-meter lot is a 36m-inspired 300-sq-m building, another building is currently in construction. The Marcian Hotel building, whose name was derived by combining its owners' surname Marcelle and Gerry, is clean, neatly painted with beige-brown hues that match the lighting at night. The building has 21 rooms (at 28 sq m each) with minimal amenities conveniently located on both the ground and second floor. The hotel also offers a 212.5-sq-m swimming pool.

Located in Sit. Manican, Andagao, Kalibo, Aklan beside Lame Café, the hotel is a 5-minute drive from Kalibo International Airport and 3 minutes away from the Kalibo town proper. The hotel sits on the quiet side of the town, yet accessible to the main road.

According to Marcian owner and manager Edilin M. Ramos, the 4-storey, 476-sq-m building is currently under construction and will offer an additional 36 rooms at 23.75 sq m each.

The hotel was built from the ground up by the family. The architect was engineer Robert John B. Ramos, and the interior designers were children of Edilin and Roberto T. Ramos Sr.

Boracay on a budget

Tourists who harbor this mistaken notion that you need to spend much to enjoy Boracay need to visit an inn in Station 2, right at the corner of the island.

The 3-story Boracay Seaside Residence Inn, an apartelle on a 273-sq-m lot area, has 20 clean rooms, and has developed quite a favorable reputation for being a cozy vacation setting for its offering a 6,000-a-month lease on its inn rooms.

Rooms in the ground floor were designed for backpackers. There is a set of 10 rooms on the ground floor centered by long stairs. The second floor offers eight rooms, and are air-conditioned and available for monthly rental, as well. The third floor's 12 rooms are rented for guests on daily accommodations. A roof deck offers a place to hang out in.

"It is an apartelle wherein we also cater to daily and monthly accommodations due to higher demands of both local and international tourists and professional hotel members, yet, the setup is like that of a hotel to capture comfort, privacy and security of all registered guests," explains resident manager Finky Aquiling.

LOCATED one kilometer away from Kalibo International Airport

STRUCTURES here are themed Christmas all-year round.

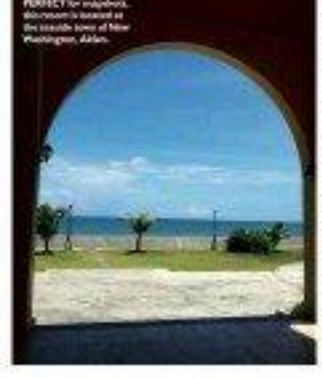
Boracay Seaside Residence Inn is located right inside tables D'Mall, the commercial center of Boracay. The guest checking in might have to walk a few additional questions from the mall guards, but once the tourist discovers the inn, the location makes perfect sense, as the inn is literally a stone's throw from the main road, the shops on D'Mall, bars, restaurants, cyclists' shop, ATM machines, coffee shops, and a 3-minute walk to the beach front.

Practical to stay

Aside from the accessibility, it is also practical to stay here for those who are budget conscious because the rates per room per night are reasonable and negotiable," Finky says.

Finky couldn't give specific measurements for each room. "Each room has different sizes, and was remodeled by my uncle Orlando Ordonez & Aquiling, now based in California. Together with his engineer civil engineer Roy Allen S. Sevagnee (for practical reasons," Finky did the interior, which she says has been a "fashion talent and passion."

A travel stopover pro-viewer as over the-top accommodation of leisurers unfortunate) would be the Sampaguita Gardens Resort in the seaside town of New Washington, Aklan, 30 minutes east of Kalibo International Airport. Some of its structures are themed Christmas all-year round, and season-changing hues are a welcoming line at the driveway. Otherwise, the rest of the structures are Mediterranean-themed, perfect for snapshots.


PERFECT for snapshots, this resort is located at the seaside town of New Washington, Aklan.

Editor Cesar G. Pangayong

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Mail us your feedback: inquirer.lifestyle@gmail.com or lifestyle@inquirer.net

New home for kids with cancer

By Charles E. Bahar

SINCE 2001, Maria Fe Morejon has been tirelessly accompanying her daughter Joanda Ziv to the Philippine Children's Medical Center in Quezon City.

Joanda Ziv, now 13 years old, is afflicted with Blue Rubber Bleb Nevus Syndrome, a rare blood vessel disorder that gave her multiple and oftentimes painful bluish-colored swellings on her face as well as in the neck, shoulder and limbs.

Due chronic iron deficiency anemia and neurogastric Blue Rubber Bleb Nevus Syndrome, she is also required to undergo regular blood transfusion procedures as well as iron supplementation, a treatment that requires Joanda Ziv's parents to shell out at least P40,000 a month.

"If not for PCMC's Pediatric Cancer and Hematology Center, we wouldn't be able to afford the treatment for treatment considering the meager salary that my husband makes as a company driver," said the 43-year-old housewife who also goes out of her way to seek financial help from benevolent individuals, religious and other charitable institutions.

No surprise

It's no surprise then, that when Maria Fe and a number of parents learned that PCMC will have a new home—a 2-storey building that will rise on a 300 square-meter lot located at the back of the hospital—they all applauded the groundbreaking ceremony.

"The groundbreaking ceremony is significant for us because by moving to a bigger home, more of us poor families with sick children will be able to receive inexpensive yet effective treatment," Maria Fe explained.

The P15-million building funded by the Health Department is set to be completed by the end of this year.

"At present we are struggling to keep up with the growing number of patients making the center's lowly 16-unit PCHC's narrow 20-bed facility could only accommodate around 30 young outpatients a day. By moving to a new and bigger home, PCMC would be able to offer 50 beds and the ability to accommodate around 100 young outpatients a day," said Dr. Julius Lecciones, PCMC executive director.

Education and training

Lecciones added that PCMC plans to locate in the new PCMC building, facilities and offices that would enable the education and training of more health personnel in the generation level possible.

"These facilities and offices will enable our health personnel to recognize cancer and channel more-than-ever referrals to physicians in order to diagnose the disease early and give appropriate treatment," he said.

The new building will serve as a "brain center" that will process enrollees in pediatric oncology. "From here we will continue our efforts to establish a national referral network as well as develop funding initiatives to match the financial capability of families of those afflicted children," Lecciones explained.

Long-term survival

He added that if detection is improved, the Philippines may be able to increase the long-term survival rate, which is currently in two out of 10 patients.

"Our aim is to reduce childhood cancer mortality to at least 30 percent over the next five years through the concerted efforts of government, professional groups and the private sector. PCMC is in a unique position to contribute greatly to this crusade because this hospital is focusing in its main concentration the sick children from poor families," he said.

As the country's biggest tertiary care center for children under the control of the Department of Health's National Center for Specialized Health Care, the PCMC also trains doctors to become pediatric cardiologists that would enable them to become involved in diagnostic procedures on children.

Since 1987, PCMC has already trained more than 30 pediatric oncologists, some of them assigned in the 13 satellite centers located to select hospitals around the country. They serve as PCMC's arms in provincias as well as in first line personnel.

Activities

Despite our efforts, most activities are still concentrated here at PCMC. Hopefully, with the P358 million that is allotted to this hospital, we would be able to buy the needed medical equipment including CT scan, MRI and diagnostic machines, thus could improve PCMC's capacity to help more children with cancer and blood disorders," said Dr. Maria Cecilia Cruz of PCMC.

Lecciones related that it took PCMC four years and countless meetings with government executives in both the House of Representatives and the SOS as well as philanthropists and private companies in order to secure the needed funding.

"Aside from the financial support we are receiving from the government, we are also thankful that private corporations like medicaments omnibus to support us (aside from the P641,000 that it recently handed over, the French pharmaceutical company already donated around P10 million to support the hospital's My Child Matters Program that began in 2006)," Lecciones reported.

Childhood cancer is the fourth leading cause of child death in the country accounting to 7% to 10 percent of total child deaths.

It is reported that every year, an estimated 3,500 Filipino children get stricken with cancer but only 2,500 of them get to be diagnosed.

Holy Week also cleanses the environment

Text and photo by Vince R. Salazar

MANY FILIPINOS view the abstinence from eating meat as a self-sacrifice necessary to cleanse the soul. At the very least, for one week every year, the country has a chance to catch up with its fecal sampling—which is in the per capita consumption of vegetables is concerned. The country has the lowest annual per capita intake of vegetables in Asia, with only 59 kilograms, as compared to China's 230 kg.

Members of the scientific community believe that it may not only be souls going meatless dinners. Abstinence from eating meat may also benefit health and the environment, as well.

Stanford University biochemist Patrick G. Hanes, who has been a vegetarian for more than 30 years (and's vegan for more than five years), has been an advocate of the plant-based diet for reasons that include "pulling an end to animal farming" because of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by such farms.

In 2006, Forbes Magazine featured Hanes, who is the early 1990s invented the SNA microscope, a tool that measures how cells make use of their DNA, and one of the three scientists who launched in 2000 a free, online scientific journal called the Public Library of Science (PLOS) when he took a break from his normal scientific work to focus on changing the way the world farms and eats. Forbes wrote that Hanes "wants to put an end to animal farming, at least put a significant dent in our global hunger for cows, pigs and chickens."

According to Hanes, "while livestock accounts for only 9 percent of human-caused carbon dioxide, it accounts for 37 percent of human-caused methane (how of is emanating from the animals' digestive systems) and 65 percent of human-caused nitrous oxide, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Both are far better at trapping heat than carbon dioxide, meaning that cows, chickens and their ilk have a larger greenhouse effect than all the cars, trucks and planes in the world."

Filipino environmentalist Czarni Bascara is following Hanes's footsteps, as vulture, cashier, footprint, by studying the human brain in relation to plant-based nutrition, and the environment in relation to plant-based diet. As an advocate, he has also held hands the Meatless Monday Philippines, convincing schools and institutes that a plant-based diet would improve the quality of their lives, there are just three of many reasons a plant-based diet benefits humans and the planet.

NO LAMENTS: Eaters turned virtue-Pauline Pagsolingan in Restaurant in QC consumed dinner: Low-fat and cheese-less sugar lasagna and lumongtao tofu skewers with guava-chili sauce and alfalfa.

1 Persons Alzheimer's Dementia earlier received to bypass Health the link between intelligence and a plant-based diet. "A high intelligence quotient (IQ) before exercising is a person's ability to make smart choices. Conversely, vegetables, particularly the leafy greens, are an energizing regimen for the brain. People who eat more veggies have low risk for Alzheimer's disease. An elderly who consumes greater than two vegetable servings per day during midlife has a brain five years younger than a colleague who eats less vegetables and more sweets."

2 The lion demand for meat, the sensible the population of Beefstock Liverpool production has now been considered a key driver of climate change, as was first recognized in the United Nations 2013 report "Liverpool's Long Shadow in 2006". The per capita greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) number fell below 1 metric ton per year by 2050 to prevent a potentially catastrophic global surface temperature increase of 20°C as declared by the 2009 Copenhagen Consensus. At of 2009, the livestock sector alone had already occupied 32 percent of humanity's suggested safe operating space for anthropogenic GHG.

3 Filipinos can prevent cardiovascular the stress and concert with responsible meat. According to the WHO/FAO expert consultation report on diet, nutrition and prevention of chronic diseases, the recommended intake should be a minimum 400 grams of fruits and vegetables per day (or 146 kg per year). Approximately 1.7 million (2.8 percent) deaths worldwide are attributable to low fruit and vegetable consumption. Increasing intakes to at least five servings a day can help prevent 14 percent of gastrointestinal deaths, 11 percent of ischemic heart disease deaths and 9 percent of stroke deaths.

Now, is going meatless really a sacrifice?

(Please share your happy concern for more options.)

Clinically proven skin brands launched

By Theresa S. Samaniego

WHO DOESN'T into and dream of having a fair, flawless, wrinkle- and blemish-free skin?

Unfortunately, not all of us are blessed to have skin as white as snow. Add to that, the pollution and daily grind that sun has to face every single day make it a lot more difficult to maintain a clear and healthy skin.

With such dilemma, a big amount of unwilling individual's money is spent on vanity products. But the sad reality is that not all of these products live up to their promise of giving one the clear, smooth and blemish-free skin he/she is dreaming of.

The good news however is that we now have more dermatologists and pharmaceutical firms that continue to develop mid-treatments, information and provide certain products to use for certain types of skin-conditions and concern.

Full support

Recently, global pharmaceutical communications services company Ketchi extended its full support for dermatologists in the Asia-Pacific region through its Ketchi Skin Science line of products.

Ketchi Skin Science is a range of high-quality, clinically proven skin care brands for sun treatment, wound healing and skin aging.

"We are privileged to support skin care experts in the region with our comprehensive range of clinically proven safe and effective dermatological products," said Dr. Manfredo G. Perez, Medical and Scientific Affairs Director, Ketchi Philippines.

The different products were launched during a roundtable discussion that was organized in connection with the 20th Regional Conference of Dermatology (ICD).

First held in 1972, the biennial ICD aims to maintain the highest professional standards for dermatologists within the region and foster cooperation and exchanges of the different national dermatological societies in Southeast Asia and Australia.

"This collegial gathering of respected skin care experts in the Asia-Pacific region is the perfect venue to launch our range of science-based skin care products," said Nenia E. Torres, country head, Ketchi Philippines.

Product line

Unlike other dermatological products which can be bought over the counter, Ketchi Skin Science offers a range of skin rheumpeutic and aesthetic products that are prescribed by dermatologists, plastic surgeons and obstetricians.

Included in the product line are Ketchi Sun Science ultra-light sunscreen cream for the treatment of mild to moderate atopic dermatitis; Dermacin Ultra, a moisturizer, fast-drying silicone gel with advanced scar treatment formula; Kinetrase, an anti-aging concentrated cosmetic that gives growth factor kinetin for the treatment of fine lines, wrinkles, skin sun tone and blotchiness; Papaina, a specially formulated line of products that keeps acne-prone skin in good condition through its cleansing, toning and moisturizing action; and other products for the treatment of skin infections and glabellar lines.

"Various clinical studies show that Papaina is an effective and safe treatment for acne. Niacinamide (the active ingredient of Papaina) has no photosensitizer and phototoxic effects, making Papaina safe to use even in daytime formulations," explained Prof. Barbara Wendt, past president of the Indian Acne Board and secretary of the Association Lombarda di Dermatologia e Venereologia.

Delay aging

"Clinical trials have shown that Idrotin [the active ingredient of Kinetrase] can delay and even reverse the effects of aging in human skin cells," said Dr. Priya Sen, consultant dermatologist and laser surgeon, National Skin Center, Singapore.

Ketchi was formed in 2003 by a powerful strategic partnership between Quintiles, the world's leading pharmaceutical services organization; Temasek Holdings, one of the largest investment companies in Singapore; and Duffig Group, the largest pharmaceutical distribution and supply chain management network in Asia-Pacific. Ketchi aims to become the leading provider of integrated healthcare brands and services to improve the lives of people in the region.

In November 2011, the Pennsylvania-based pharmaceutical company Mercator Group completed the acquisition of Ketchi.

Big gaps in epilepsy care

WE'D like to congratulate the organizers and participants to the recently concluded Asian Oceanian Congress on Epilepsy hosted by our local neurologists. Six days including our own Dr. Eleanor Cabral-Lim were recognized for their extraordinary contributions to epilepsy care.

The congress was sponsored by the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE), through the Philippine League Against Epilepsy, and was held last March 22-25 at the SMX Convention Center at the Mall of Asia Complex, Manila.

More than a thousand local delegates were joined by delegates from India, China, Indonesia, Australia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar and Nepal as they tackled important issues and updates on epilepsy care.

Experts lament that epilepsy in many countries in the world, including ours, is receiving very little government attention in the past decades. Priority has always been given to other "high-profile" and "urgent" problems like heart disease, cancer, dengue fever and other infectious diseases. Not that the interest and focus given these diseases are inappropriate, but truly economically viable diseases (DCDs) are just becoming the base of mankind, but this causes like epilepsy should also be given the rightful attention it deserves.

Based on surveys 80 percent of people with epilepsy are in resource-poor, developing countries. Epilepsy care in these countries is basically limited and the vast majority of the governments and all those involved in epilepsy care is the fact that the majority of epilepsy patients go untreated.

In an effort to compensate for the lack of government attention given epilepsy, several private organizations aim to address various aspects on epilepsy care, but it is still not enough. The ILAE epilepsy congress hopes to fill in the gaps in epilepsy care as it aims to encourage research and develop the interest further for a better understanding of various aspects in epilepsy care. Best practices of various sectors in the country and other Asian nations in improving the quality of epilepsy care are also discussed. Points which each one could learn and try to adapt in their respective countries.

Symposiums

Various symposiums, developed by local and regional committees of the International Bureau for Epilepsy were conducted during the event, featuring speakers from the Philippines and other Asia-Pacific countries. Some of the topics discussed were "Seizure aggravation by antiepileptic drugs; a view from genomics" by Prof. Samuel Berkovic, M.D. (Australia); "Psychogenic non-epileptic seizures: treatment and outcome" by Dr. Satarupa Das Kanungo (India); "The burden of epilepsy in the Asian-Oceanian region" by Dr. Byung-in Lee (Korea); and "Delivery, breastfeeding and child rearing in women with epilepsy" by Dr. Eleanor Cabral-Lim (Philippines).

MEDICAL FILES

Rafael Castillo, M.D.

Addressing the yawning gaps in epilepsy care is truly a gargantuan challenge. Cost-effective, sustainable epilepsy care services, delivering first-line antiepileptic drugs through established primary healthcare facilities, are urgently needed to decrease these treatment gaps. Public health education is of utmost importance in dispel wrong notions of the disease, like it's the result of witchcraft, or a curse that could never be medically addressed. Neurologists and other healthcare workers with local experience and knowledge of the culture, must volunteer as advocates, and give guidance to policy makers. By serving as committed and hardworking advocates like Dr. Cabral-Lim, they can make a big difference.

A highlight of the event was the Asian and Oceanian Outstanding Achievement Epilepsy Award (AOAE), which was introduced by the Committee of Asian and Oceanian Affairs (CAOA) of the IAE in 2010 to recognize medical or non-medical professionals who have shown great effort and have exerted great contributions in improving the quality of epilepsy care.

Aside from Dr. Cabral-Lim, the only doctor who received the award were Doctors Fushi Inoue of Japan, Ramin Kazeki of Japan, Ratnapalli Radhakrishnan of India, Pongsakdi Virabhiphan of Thailand and Liem Wu of China.

Another Filipino who was recognized in the congress was Ruchelle Rho, a young artist with epilepsy whose passion to reach out to children and convey their his time and resources to humanitarian undertakings were recognized.

Editor Cesar D. Hangarang
PROPERTY

Quality homes for modern Filipino's discerning taste

By Theresa S. Sanuango

KEEPING A strong foothold in the Philippine real estate industry is no easy feat to achieve, especially with what the local sector had to go through during the Asian crisis in the late '90s, which saw a devastating slump that had almost driven property firms out of business.

So to last in the industry for more than two decades and be able to handle the challenges that come with such a complex business only proves something about the stability and integrity of the developer.

And this can't be more true in the case of New San Jose Builders Inc. (NSJBI) which has been serving since 1996 to provide quality lifestyle choices for the discerning taste of the modern Filipinos.

Innovative approach

A privately held real estate company, NSJBI has been known for its innovative approach in real estate development by offering a wide array of choices and methods in owning quality homes in a variety of locations.

NSJBI corporate communications head Gina Virtudes explains that as a construction company in the mixed, New San Jose Builders has already become the partner of both the government and private sector in building communities for mass housing, schools, sustainable townships, prime residential condominiums, hospitals and bridges.

And it was because of these numerous and varied projects that the company had developed a "corporate position of wanting to give every Filipino a diverse, quality and value-based home they can truly call their own."

Portfolio

Virtudes points out that NSJBI has a portfolio of 10 vertical developments and one horizontal project, each of which has its own unique strength to lords on, owner to cater to the needs and wants of specific markets.

This, she adds, is what makes each project at par with the other developments available to the market.

Current projects of New San Jose Builders include the Victoria Towers, which is located at the heart of Quezon City's commercial district; Victoria Station 1, which the company claims to have everything one needs in a high-rise development; Victoria Station 2 that provides avenues for guests to enjoy sports and recreation; Fort Victoria which is the crown jewel of New San Jose's developments and proud of practical luxury coming to life.

NSJBI projects are strategically located around Metro Manila.

This company also has developments in Makati and Manila like the Victoria de Makati, which is located at center of the central business district; Victoria de Manila, on the other hand, is located at the center of Manila and five minutes away from an LRT station; while the two are Victoria de Manila 2, Victoria de Torres Morato, Victoria de Binondo, Isabella de Valenzuela and Victoria Manila Hills.

"These projects are strategically located around Metro Manila and offer all what we believe are essentials—location, convenience, a prime investment and being able to provide a healthy lifestyle—for the working class," says Virtudes adding that "these are the value propositions that NSJBI builds on."

Likewise, Virtudes reveals that the company aside from providing affordable quality homes, also makes for sufficient and prudent close family ties in each of its developments.

Active lifestyle

"Helping Filipinos embrace an active lifestyle is an integral part of NSJBI's vision. These are presented in two of our projects—Victoria de Manila 2 on 26th Avenue and Victoria Station 2, which both has a sports complex," Virtudes shares.

Victoria de Manila 2 is equipped with a two-hectare indoor sports complex, six lane bowling facilities, Olympic-length swimming pools, fully equipped and professionally manned gyms, tennis, badminton and basketball courts, billiard halls, open activity centers and a members only spa.

Meanwhile, Victoria Station 2 has two badminton courts, two basketball courts, two tennis court, billiard and table tennis hall, archery, squash, shooting range. The sports center's most unique feature, however, is the 50-meter Olympic-size swimming pool.

And these, according to Virtudes, are just some of the reasons homebuyers should make NSJBI developments their top of the mind choice.

Good investment

"Real estate investment, especially with NSJBI are good investment. With our prime location, the lifestyle, convenience and security that we provide, one can be assured that valuation of the property will continue to appreciate," Virtudes claims.

And because NSJBI has its own construction company, it has better control of the quality and speed of construction, and as a result minimize price mark-up against with third party construction. That class realizes NSJBI is not only finish its developments more quickly, but to also offer housing units at more affordable prices.

"NSJBI always keep one step ahead by pioneering the latest technology in building and construction, offering the owner innovative financing terms and offering value above and beyond customer expectations like direct connection to the MRT in some developments or a full sports complex beyond a simple gym," she explains.

"We will continue to strengthen our corporate and brand positioning, not only by advertising, but through a more aggressive PR effort, that will accelerate and will more stories about what we offer and what we are as a real estate developer," she concludes.

Fort Victoria

Victoria Towers

Victoria Station

Victoria Station 2

Isabella de Valenzuela

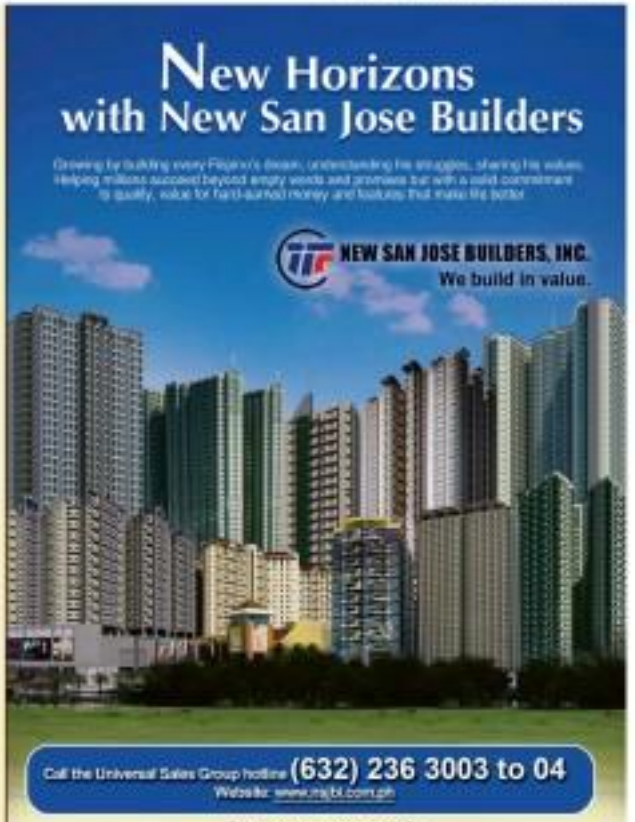
Victoria de Torres Morato

Victoria de Makati

Victoria de Manila

Victoria de Manila

Victoria de Manila 2



super LIFESTYLE

Keeping the Dark Knight dark

An interview with 'Batman: Dark Knight' artist David Finch

By Clay Tams, The Comics Cube
Contributor

DAVID Finch is the current artist of DC Comics' "Batman: Dark Knight." He is the Shooter Award-winning illustrator of, among other things, Marvel's "New Avengers" and "Ultimate X-men." Thanks to Fully Booked, he was able to visit the Philippines for a visit, and Clay Tams of The Comics Cube [www.comicscube.com] was able to spend a few minutes with him for an interview.

Why Batman?

Batman is such a great visual character. I love the shadows and I love the city. It's such a dark city, and I can be really creative with it. Because it's not a real city, I can make buildings look any kind of configuration I want and it will work. The villains are the most fun to draw in this entire business. Everybody loves the Joker, the Penguin, and even the Riddler is fun!

Something I've always wondered: Does DC have a scale model of Gotham City that you guys have to follow, or do you just make it up as you go along?

It's very much made up as we go along. I think there are certain landmarks that we try to hear to scale, and lately there's been more of an effort to make things a little more cohesive. So especially we creating and drawing different landmarks and different things in the city, and also the political figures, we're posting that to a file so database for everybody to refer to, because it is pretty easy for things to start falling apart.

Who's your favorite Batman villain?

The Joker. Visually speaking, I think he's great. But just in general, he's easy, which makes him so difficult to write, but when he's well-written, he's so interesting because the things he does are so off-the-wall and unpredictable that it keeps it really interesting. Just for drawing him a point. He never [was] bored to it. It's never completely routine.

What's your favorite Batman story and why?

I think "Batman: Year One," by Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli. It's just such a formidably structured story. I think it's such a crime-fighter story. It is the format wasn't used for the movie. I can't argue with Christopher Nolan, because those movies are great, but if it would have been me, I think I would have just done that.

What do you think it is about Batman that gives him that kind of range? Other icons, like Superman or Spider-Man, they don't really have it.

Spider-Man is a very optimistic char-

KEEPING C3

Hunting for talent in Manila

Marvel Comics scout C.B. Cebulski discovers Marvel-ous Pinoy artists right here

By Oliver M. Palanduri
Contributor

WHAT we're looking for is original, something we haven't seen before," said Marvel Comics' C.B.Cebulski, senior vice president of the company's Creative and Content Development, during his recent visit to Manila.

Cebulski was in the country for the "Next Comic Marvel" event and talent search, organized by National Book

CLINIQUE
BONUS

Take home the best of Clinique. Free.*

Your Bonus contains: Cosmetic Bag, All About Eyes, Long Last Soissweur SPF 15, Moisture Surge Extended Thirst Relief, Liquid Facial Soap Oily Skin Formula, Clarifying Lotion Twice A Day Exfoliator 3, Dramatically Different Moisturizing Gel

*With your purchase of 4,500 or more, get Clinique best-sellers. Step up your purchase to 5,000 and receive a silver travel bag with your Bonus.

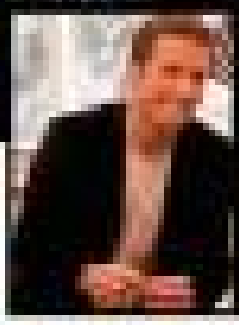
Like us on facebook at www.facebook.com/CliniquePH

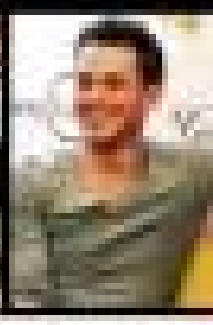
CLINIQUE
Allergy Tested. 100% Fragrance Free.
Formulated for Asian skins.

Exclusively available at
Rustan's Makati Tel. No. 8843521 • Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza Tel. No. 6334636 loc 110 • Rustan's Alabang Tel. No. 8505030 loc 110
Rustan's Gaisano Tel. No. 8139698 • Rustan's Cebu Tel. No. (032) 2341833 • Clinique Timezone Mall Tel. No. 33866994
Essenses at Powerplant Mall Tel. No. 8229406 • Clinique SM Mall of Asia Tel. No. 5360422

A Super date with Blake

Kevin Donnelly sits down and reminisces with the British actress who has starred alongside – and had – Batman, Superman and Hulk – but finally got her man





Keeping the Dark Knight...

Hunting for talent...

Canon
Buy Red,
Not Gray!

BDO
5%
A 5% rebate* exclusively yours at SM's 3-Day Sale!
ACE

Screaming for 'One Last Cry'

I LOVE Brian McKnight, but I haven't always loved him. Brian McKnight is the type of artist people love for soulmoment moments, and the type some cohabs for that very reason. We were no cohabs before cohabs.

I had never seen him in concert before, and for most of last year I was largely intent on seeing him live. While people lined up to get into see Charli Gib for Cebu, I hurriedly ponied up my upper box seats to Brian McKnight.

"Ahh", he was in the Philippines for a very long time," someone sweet, and kind David Francisco, Bird's Martin, and the newest addition, David Archuleta. Yes, I loved if the Tagalog version of "Sorry" duets with Regine Velasquez, and that awkward teenage-sausage proposal to "Be Around" why he stuck around here for so long.

It was late o'clock on a Friday night. My friend exhausted "I love Marcy Bergeron might do a duet with Brian McKnight tonight"—and that seemed like a likely rumor, given that both have expressed mutual admiration of each other.

The opener, who everybody thought was the opening cycle vaughted Regine Velasquez, was this young soloist called Angeline Quinto who had shoot 29 screaming the hands she called Angelenes. Her performance signaled that the vocal gamers had begun.

Soon, we were "Back with Brian McKnight," who climbed up and down a step-ladder ran near someone. It was all seven, savvy to create the mood. He strutted while four songs for the business up front, who were of us caught on the big screen unprepared, posing on lipstick.

It was like I was made to sit in the power seat' table before I had the clear of the situation I came here for: "One Last Cry" My soulmate reminded that three songs, were only warm-ups. It hit me that this was the first time in years I had gone to a gig without alcohol.

He made all the women with their boyfriends dance, and then like Beyoncé, I mentally put my hands up with all the single ladies. The swivel-motion was confounded by his offer to for every single woman's rose for the night—which is McKnight's reserved role anyway while your boyfriend leaves, you the consolation is Brian McKnight.

But before that could happen, some months-more music from the large tape of The Greatest Hits player had to be released.

Why do we love this kind of sentimental music? Preemptively Smith Bodies Luther Vandross, MYMP have set influenced from a young age in home Showers public, wondering whether or not Irish building was PG13 or why wedding singers all seemed to sing from the same songbook?

'Soul' causes

These fifty-horse songs shortcoming ride each other's nuts, each names sung "love" and "again" to often in Chinese restaurants are "crystal" and "garden," and learn to invoke the middle spirit of tenderness, even for selection most dancers of a person. By improving three short music codes, he was acknowledging the Pinoy "soul" cause, on which his golden turtle stocked four glamours.

At one point in the concert, Brian McKnight sat down like a dinner guest before someone's living room piano running through songs of his childhood, and explaining what each of them meant to him—we cheered on every intro like we'd gone through the exact steps of extramarital love.

"Come take my hand and we will ride on the wings of love," he sang to girls in junior high, and after a few cover hits, began to imitate Stevie Wonder's every for "Overjoyed." Gobble, gobble, every one of us.

Paul McCartney cues sung "Would I think that people would have had enough of silly love songs. But I look around me and I see it isn't so." Love songs cater to a buffet of feelings, an abundance of mediocre food that you compensate for by eating all you can.

But there's nothing more derivative than when you cut no mush and have to pay a surcharge for the leftovers—from during down the volume of inexpressible anger become when you follow Brian McKnight up until the highest notes, and in. Riskproof Silvia Sweetheart for sex-hearing it?

Love songs are remembrance songs. Some are personal landmarks to depend on the content of easy-commented cues, and that's why collectively we help forecast the chorus of romantic fear. As Eric Hoot wrote in "Concerning the Romantic Utopia," "The sun of ordinary schedule, music, light, and loved, the sun of self-consciousness of space and time, the endanger of usual records of love make romance a staged reality," as are within which public meanings are exchanged and demonstrated to currently the bench."

I recently envisioned Brian McKnight from a self that had dropped him for contemporary American poetry and Stephen Hawking having my hand to tongue at intellectual videos. I reasoned why sentimental MAB felt like all the poor pieces I never enjoyed, or the moonlight shining on Pauls after the sun goes down.

It was his "gentle highschool," a song-value lowering to 69.9 and 98.6 suits like most cool master of performances. Conversation. Driving never really hillsections, his songs to me were a motion sentimentality, unless I was drunk and someone kissed in the room love to "Back At One" of remember her—but even then we lose.

Unrequited love

I couldn't understand the begging for what I couldn't understand—before the world expressed solidarity with Adele's "21" album, what kind of heart's home would destroy our last cry? Why, in the third season of American Idol 3, would part Filipino Camille Velasco cry to the song?

Strangely, for me it was to take to some. Upon hearing a radio station like unrequited love—especially if one such evil-water con. piety was sexually called Love. We were version we had gotten that home with the cowbitches through our noble predecessor a series, a busted ten, and the Roses now could characterize debtor who now worked in government.

It was the tenth house we'd been injured from, and if there was a baby with a couple, the Cloud Kraft said "Give them chrisma" and so with unexpectedness, we filled the void realm of relaxed love songs where brain loosely but sufficiently explained our detachment. Our dreams were shattered, our broken hearts were trending on the shelf we didn't have.

And that's when my love for Brian McKnight truly began. I began to use his songs as a nostalgic consolation whenever the classmates mocked a genuine outbreak human cry—which was anything that involved "you choosing a chemist" actual people. Failed school applications, and even a scalded hot water. But music could save me.

A former Seventh Day Adventist who grew up with gospel, Brian McKnight is a masterful interpreter of the Love church. "The solution to make those relationships work—DO YOU WANT TO KNOW? VISIT THAT SOLUTION IS?" He preached while the stage lights flashed yellow. "Sweet Thing, McKnight is a master, for most time trying to find that special somebody, trying to fi—and finally-pitch! find someone we can live with, but we should be try-to-happy to find find special someone-but we can't live without."

The next song was the same, adding to the definition he lays out in his duet with Angeline Quinto for his original duet with Vanessa Williams, "Love Is" (not the screaming Angelfaces).

Let forever like Mr. McKnight, I see the coming of the sun. The Adele panel (crooning the latest of offspring is something that necessitate deems have condition found us to appreciate—Gary V and his sons, Sharon Cuneta and K, Zoltán Padilla and her daughter) in leather pants like his father, Brian McKnight Jr. are the turnback song "6.8.12" until the end.

Has I were over? the song as well I ventured to go home to check his Starbucks stores. But when I couldn't do anything, I was why he interpreted our choosing to mean singing three slow songs and running down the VIP aisle holding his hand out for a concierge high five. I was confused, but not so confused as when Brian on the count to five. He was no longer my contemplator of my fifth milestone; he was to Daddy.

But he did finally sing "One Last Cry." "Pft- sho-" I was yelling. I was screaming. I was drunk on solitude breakfast. I professed only to enjoy this moment—but he dived up and walked away for licks. Post-pause had been waiting for the song. The screaming of security left a sudden vacuum. When he eventually was to play that silly love song at some point.

I wouldn't believe this was happening. People continued to sing "One Last Cry" as they walked out of the Araneta Coliseum. It was like Brit Asaco came back to life to sing "At Last." And at last...I was able to see Brian McKnight. Daddy or not—those are just some songs Adele can't sing.

super LIFESTYLE

JRS EXPRESS

SOMETHING DIFFERENT!
CELEBRATE!
So thick & creamy, it's served upside down.
DQ Dairy Queen

TRAVEL BUDDY
Samsung WB650F

BLACK BEAUTY
Samsung Notebook Series 9

The South Korean giant pushes the boundaries of the future as it introduces its innovative product lineup for 2012 to the Asian market

PROJECTOR SMARTPHONE
Samsung Galaxy Beam

Samsung preps Asia for a 'smarter' lifestyle ahead

By Angela V. Ignacio
Contributor

OUR ELECTRONIC devices are becoming more intelligent by the minute. Some of us might even be dreaming of the day we can talk to our TV sets, boss our vacuum cleaners around, wirelessly control our appliances, or use our smartphones as LCD projectors. Unbelievable? Yes. But impossible? No.

Little do we know that devices enabled with these features have become reality, right under our very noses. During its third Southeast Asia, Oceania and Taiwan Forum held last March 15, Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. unveiled its new line of "smart" products that push the boundaries of the future, shaping the technological landscape...and consumer lifestyles as we know it.

Through its 2012 catalogue, the South Korean brand glamorizes its distinct connectivity and control across all of its devices, from TV sets to mobile phones, tablets to notebook PCs, and cameras to home appliances, in an effort to address the ever-growing needs of today's consumers.

"We want to excel in offering consumers positively with innovative products and excellent made-for-data content," said Gregory Lee, president and CEO of Samsung Asia.

Here's a sneak preview of some of the products that have made our screens blend in awe.

'Hi, TV!'

With today's technology, it somehow feels wrong to call your TV set an "idiot box." The LS800 LED TV, possessing a dual-core processor and screen size of up to 75 inches, embodies Samsung's three guiding pillars: Smart Interaction, Smart Content and Smart Evolution.

In one demonstration during the MA forum, this TV allows owners to interact with their TV via voice control, motion control and face recognition. Say "Hi, TV!" to turn on the voice control or "Web browser" to go online; you can also adjust the volume by saying "Volume up/down" or by pointing a hand.

A silly service offered is the

SAMSUNG SA

CLEANING ROBOT. Samsung Navi S vacuum cleaner in action at the SEA Forum

ANGELA IGNACIO

SMART SCREEN. Apart from obeying your every (voice and motion) command, this TV can even act as a tutor for children.

ANGELA IGNACIO

EASTWOOD MALL eastwood citywalk

Easter & Woodluck are setting out on an adventure to find their long lost childhood friends E-walk and Cyburp.

Visit Kid City this Easter and join their quest to be reunited with their old friends. Discover new things, make new friends, and take part in the many activities you can do along the way.

Explore Kid City's EIGHT MARVELOUS LANDMARKS

Buy an Easter Wonderland Passport for P950.00 to get loot bags, enjoy one free admission to more than 50 kiddie, adventure and amusement rides a whole lot of freebies! Kids who join the All Grown Up Costume Contest will also get a chance to be part of the parade and win exciting prizes!

Advanced passport selling will be from March 28 to April 7, 2012 at the Eastwood Mall Concierge Desk.

A premier development

For inquiries, please call the Concierge: 328-8888 / 330-8888 / 6911 8888/111
www.eastwoodcitywalk.com • www.facebook.com/eastwoodcity • www.twitter.com/eastwoodmall

Graphics Design: Ruben Joshua Cardo

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

Shangri-La's Mactan makes pool time more fun with Aquaplay

SHANGRI-LA'S Mactan Resort and Spa, Cebu makes playtime more fun for children this summer with Aquaplay, a brand-new aqua park located next to the main pool. The brightly colored Aquaplay is specially designed for very young children to enjoy water activities in a safe environment.

Highlights of the interactive facility include three slides, a rainbow shower and a baby bungee. The gently sloping slides provide the thrill of splashing down into shallow water. The rainbow shower is a mini-shaped structure that creates a heaven effect with soft spray.

There are also strategically placed nozzles that let children create their own water efforts that importantly let parents with infants, there is a baby bungee that excites jumpers and is shaded by a floatation-themed canopy. This allows babies to get their feet wet as they do in the bungee-supported jumpers.

The Aquaplay blends seamlessly into the expanded children's pool, which is nearly three times the size of the original pool. All safety features and the resort's top priority lifeguards and designated recreation staff are posted in the area to ensure that all guests have a relaxing, worry-free experience with their families.

Playpoint, which installed the Aquaplay, is a Singapore-based company specializing in playgrounds and urban outdoor space solutions. Over the past decade, Playpoint has completed over 2,000 projects for recreational, shopping malls, schools, parks and recreational establishments around Asia. It works closely with leading landscape architects in the region to bring well-imagined projects to life.

For further information, please contact Shangri-La's Mactan Resort and Spa, Cebu at (032) 231-0288 or e-mail resort@shangri-la.com.

Club at the Hyatt offers loyalty card

HYATT Hotel and Casino Manila offers the best loyalty card deal in town, with this new and improved Club at the Hyatt dining privileges program. Be part of Club at the Hyatt and enjoy the program's dining promotions for only P4,500 net, now with bigger and better benefits. The Hyatt card-holder can look forward to as much as 50 percent off on total food bill at the hotel's award-winning Market Cafe, Li Li and The Fireplace. Other exclusive benefits include special dining gift vouchers, at the hotel's restaurants featuring a complimentary dinner buffet for two people at Market Cafe; 25 percent off on wine and all-day dining; and 10 percent off food and beverage discount at The Lounge, Pastry Boutique, Pool Bar and The Music Bar; 15 percent off on all room types booked under the Best Available Rate; a 10 percent discount on gold and silver gym membership; and selected spa services; and special members' rate on promotional offers and invitation to the hotel's exclusive events. A Club at the Hyatt complementary card is also available for just P2,000 net. Applications for Club at the Hyatt membership are accepted only for local residents and foreign residents with a valid ACR I-CARD. Valid identification and a local mailing address are required in order to register as a Club at the Hyatt member. To become a member, please call Club at the Hyatt at 247-8666 or 891-1234 ext. 7151, and ask for Jackie Sy. Alternatively, e-mail cath.mon@hyatt.com.

Dare to flair at Pan Pacific

JOIN the excitement on March 26 at 8 p.m. and witness as the best aspiring bartenders dare to amaze the crowd with their top-performing skills at Pan Pacific Manila's first Flair Tending Competition. Tickets are priced at Pan Pacific Lounge for P500 net redeemable of two rounds of drinks, cocktail food and live entertainment. For reservations, call 316-0768 and ask for the ladies. All courtesy of Pan Pacific Manila is at M. Adriatico corner Gen. Malvar Street, Malate, Manila. For events and other offers, visit panpacific.com.

Great summer vacation in the city

WANT to beat the summer? Investing the traffic and the crowds? Downtown hotels and resorts offers a great bargain for you to enjoy your holiday summer. For just P2,000 net, avail of a studio unit for two at the BSA Tower located at 1001 Legaspi Street, Legaspi Village, right across from Greenbelt 5. Add, a 1Bdr Suites located on 100 Carlos Palanca Street, Legaspi Village, Makati. These self-catered studio units are actually located right in the heart of the business hub, Makati City, walking distance from Makati's shopping centers where you can find a wide array of cuisine ranging from fine dining to the easy on-the-pocket meals. Take advantage of this great offer from March 15 to May 31, and get 10 percent off from walk-in rates. They includes complimentary breakfast for two, unlimited Wi-Fi, free use of the gym and the pool and one bottle of wine. Rates vary, and complimentary bottled water. (This offer is subject to room availability.) For inquiries on how to avail of this great summer vacation right in the city, call Quantum Hotels and Resorts at 894-1463 or 892-3447 or visit www.quantumsuites.com.

Marry me at Regency Lagoon

REGENCY Lagoon Resort is proving the much awaited Weddings and Destinations fair to be held on March 26 and 27 at the activity Center of Williams Mall. Have your dream Boracay wedding reception for as low as P72,000 for a party of 50 persons minimum. For as low as P1,000, one can relax at one of Regency Lagoon's premium villas for a weekstay for two nights in a deluxe room. This includes overnight, romantic breakfast and dinner and free round trip transfers via Caticlan. Promo rates are only available during the two day wedding and travel trade fair on a book-and-buy basis. For inquiries, call the Manila office at 353-7777 or visit www.regencylagoon.com.ph.

Maternal matters with Medela

PREGNANT and considering how to best care for your baby? What kind of breastmilk to give your child the most excellent nutritional start? Spend an afternoon at Sugarbird... Kicks that nourish for Maternal Wellness with Medela, a free talk on May 28, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., with Medela Moms Bang Nakayasu and Medela Coaches Rey Gracia and Jessica Ang. Learn the benefits of breastfeeding your baby. The two veteran breastfeeding moms will also share their insights on how to prepare for a successful breastfeeding journey. In addition, Medela Moms Bang will share her own journey and tips on how to breastfeed multiples. Moms will also share practical tips to manage a three-child household. Breastfeeding basics while still being available to her two-year old sons' dilemmas, came prepared with questions you want answered for afterwards. Medela Moms Bang and Manuel will run down with you for a candid and intimate question and answer session. Sugarbird is located at the G/ and 2/F of the MUDCard Lifestyle Center, 31 Pinatubo Road, corner Gen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Urdaneta Village Makati City (812-2323). The Greenhills branch is located at G/F Health Cube Building, 236 Wilson Street, West Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila, MM 4600or mobile 09171 829-4031. Like us Facebook Sugarbird Foods That Nourish and follow on Twitter @sugarbirdph

Cravings offers guiltless pleasures this Lent

AT CRAVINGS, there is no room for blood feud even during Lent, and for the morning-only days. Until April 7, Cravings is offering a guilt-free guilt-inducing joy ride with Southern Cravings, an exquisitely prepared line-up of dishes that will bring a heavenly feeling for your heart and tummy in this holiest of seasons. Vegetarians will surely enjoy Spinach Cannelloni with Roma-Style Tomato Sauce for only P295. Have a spicy taste there with Cravings' Asian Tofu Salad with Sweet Soy Glaze for only P235. Satisfy your feasty passions with Fish and Chips for only P195. Have a healthy and hearty serving of Tinolang Manok with Kabak Stew and Tanguigui Glaze Primavera P575, with an unlimited serving of soup and salad. Not blessed all the superb taste of this dish as it exudes the tender taste of gluten fish with the crispiness of the vegetables in the stew and the smooth tang of the teriyaki sauce. Cravings' Guiltless Pleasures is only offered in all of Cravings restaurants. This Lenten season, visit any of Cravings branches in Ayalamall, GC, Greenbelt La Plaza Mall, Fiesta Plaza, Alabang Town Mall, Festival Supermall, Alabang, and Eastwood Mall, Libis.

Cafe on the 6th sails on to gastronomic goodness

CAFE on the 6th transforms its patio into an urban oasis for the touch of its cool satisfying menu. Ascott Makati's Cafe on the 6th presents its summer selection featuring an extensive choice of food items including a little sweet something of snacks and fresh tomatoes in the Ascott Homegrown Picks, an alternating island blend of flavors of the bottled tag-listed, the quintessential summer pasta dish Spaghetti Tropicale, Beef Bolognese Nutmeg, seafood in a bed of sauvignon blanc rice and the top choice for foodies – the Beef and Basil Nutmeg is bookended between the eye steak and king prawn combo. The Cafe on the 6th sets the mood in a sweet note with their initial Chocolate-Caramel Tart and Italian Tiramisu Panna Cotta. Making it up the top, the Cafe serves its own concoctions featuring Bitter Lying, Dominica and Paradise along with an ice of favorite – Mojito on the 6th. And from the sweet tooth on deck were SUNMaid Raisin and D.C.Con Scoops inviting to mix a spin off of ice cream and deep house. Cafe on the 6th is located at ascott Makati Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City. For enquiries and reservations, dial 729-8888 ext. 3930.

Seafood and vegetable dishes form C2's Lenten selections

C2 CLASSIC Cuisine is one with Filipinos in commemorating the coming holy days with its Lenten selections, a special line-up of carefully selected dishes that is guaranteed to give you a heavenly, guilt-free holy feast.

Vegetable lovers can have the Pinakbet, hence this classic dish of vegetables like squash, flowers, okra and cabbage topped with—fried fish—is daring. It is a simple but comforting dish with its flavorful broth. Or they can delight in the Guinataang Gulay, with its rich creamy coconut milk spring sauce combined with slices of squash, string beans or okra, sweet eggplants and okra.

Lenten dishes need not taste simple and spartan if there is Chicharong Bicolano, a mouth-love and revenge (mukbanggan) morsel topped with crunchy chicharon. This classic bicolano-cooked dish is given a surprising delightful twist by the chefs of C2.

Most lovers will find a healthy alternative with Seafood Sarsa, a combination of stewed squid, boneless milkfish and shrimps served hot on a sizzling plate, while those with a penchant for fish will find comfort with the soft meat of the Grilled Gindara.

C2's Lenten Selections will be offered in all of C2 Classic Cuisine's restaurants until April 7. This Lenten season, visit any of C2's restaurants in Robinsons Galleria, Quezon City; McKinley wing of Robinsons Place Manila; The Ledge at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, along Mandaluyong; Greenhills; and Ayala Center, Makati City.

Softel raises a toast to the graduates

SOFTEL Philippine Plaza raises a toast to the graduate class of 2012 with its Magnificent 4-night stay starts from P6,000.00 inclusive of a buffet breakfast for two at LeBar, and late check-out until 2 p.m., subject to availability. Graduates availing of this promotional package should present their valid ID as proof of graduation. Call 887-0288 ext. 7001 to 7006 to avail of room reservations@softelmanila.com. For restaurant bookings and inquiries, call 832-0888 and 831-0000 ext. 6888, or e-mail at fineservice.manila@fairmont.com. Visit www.softelmanila.com.

Tossing of the cap at Crowne Plaza

PRESENT your graduation certificate at Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria during the month of March 10 to April 15, and receive a complimentary graduation cake and a 1+1 dining privileges at any of its restaurants. The graduate will have for every group of six persons who will avail of Go Two 30's Discount (subscribe to lunch and Seven Course Lunch to dinner buffet). Then enjoy the celebration in Bar One and get a 30 percent discount on food and drinks for a group of four or more. For reservations and more details, please call 633-7222 or e-mail manila.reservations@ihg.com.

Taal Vista Hotel: Easter at the Ridge

TAAL'S memorable Easter at Taal Vista invites the spirit friend with the family within vibrant Garden Egg Hunt, bring out the creativity in your kids with an egg painting contest and face painting booth, light up their faces with fun activities such as balloon twisting, magic shows, easter games and even a petting zoo. Special rooms like just a day at Taal Vista Hotel with special packages for guests who want to enjoy the cool and breezy Tagaytay weather. Guest of Taal Vista Hotel's special Easter family Package (Feb. April 5 to 8). The package includes buffet breakfast for two, a chocolate bunny welcome gift, children's Easter lunch buffet and pool access in the kiddie kastle. Sunday at Buffet, the guests staying will also be entertained by Easter Bunny. Rates start at P6,200 net per night. Taal Vista Hotel is located at Kilometer 60, Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City. For inquiries, please call 889-4201 or (046) 413-1000.

Gran Prix
Microtel Hotels · Resorts
Jollibee
Nuci
BIGG'S

The awesome world of Draw Something

This new game is a canvas for inadvertent laughter, drama and conflict

By Tobit Yang
Contributor

MY INABILITY to draw has always been a great frustration of mine. I don't even mean draw well—when I say I can't draw, I am not exaggerating. I really can't, which is why when new social game Draw Something began making its buzzy rounds on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, I wasn't enthused. Why play a game I was sure to suck at?

Of course, curiosity and peer pressure eventually got to me so I found myself trying it out on my iPhone. It only took one drawing to get me hooked, and soon I didn't care that I was scaring strangers as I sat on a public bench giggling by myself.

Draw Something's rules are simple: Choose from three words to draw, draw it for your opponent and wait for him/her to guess. The inadvertent hilarity comes when your brain starts to interpret the words through squiggles and doodles—I've discovered that most of my drawings seem to have a phallic element, which I fully blame on my deplorable drawing skills and not my subconscious.

Draw Something's blank canvas is also the stage for drama. One player found herself engaging in angry, scribbled E-mail name calling over cheating that opponent would write down the word (instead of drawing it). We're sure it's only a matter of time before someone decides to use the game to propose and upload the footage on YouTube.

Some players's drawings are relegated to more stick figures with hints of abstract influence while others' look like they belong in a museum—or maybe a T-shirt. It's also interesting to see how a player explains a word through drawing—cava opponents who were tasked to draw Michael Jordan had different approaches: One drew a boxy with a man dribbling a ball; another simply drew a basketball; penny with the number "23." Other words on the list are real head scratchers, how to hell does one draw Rihanna, the Illuminess or Iron Jaw. Thank you, Draw Something for introducing me to Iron.

Barely six weeks old in the market, and this app has already racked up over one billion drawings. It also has dominated the mobile app game brand Zynga (of Words With Friends and Facebook games fame) bought Draw Something from its developers for $200 million. Talk about an expensive work of art.

If you haven't started playing yet, do it now. Download the free version and upgrade to a paid version once you get hooked (you will, we promise)—the paid version contains more words, 400 free coins to buy colors for your palette. Once you've downloaded it, pick up your finger and draw something!

Draw Something is available at the App Store for iPhone, iPad touch & iPad and at the Android Market for Android devices.

THE GAME carries a source of heated name calling.

OTHERS have skills ...

WHO?

... others have none.

National Book Store
What will you find today?

Mobile Phone Power Box
Never run out of battery life again—ish for Mobile Phone Fx or Box. Bring this item. It's you every time and never run about losing battery

Just you get important calls or have to send a message to your loved one. Portable and easy-to-use, the Mobile Phone Fx or Box includes the pin or two and a USB connector for charging the pc or Box. This item is compatible all iPhones and iPods.

Card Reader, Data Transfer & Charger
Bothered by long cables and connectors you bring everyday? Then hardly all-in-one card reader, data transfer and charger's are sure to save space in your bag. Use these—bare charging your phone or transferring data from your phone to your laptop. Available in various colors and kinds, these items—ll match your gadgets.

Auto Emergency Tool with Digital Tire Gauge
Be prince to "handy man"—ish the Auto Emergency Tool—ish Digital Tire Gauge. This all-in-one tool includes: LED torch, sounds, LED light, pliers, a flat and a Phillips screwdriver, scissors, seat belt cutter, glass hammer and a digital tire gauge. Never—ever about getting yourself into trouble—here you have this tool around.

Compass with Torch and Back Light
This light, eight Compass—ish Torch and Back Light makes it easy for you to find your destination day or night. Equipped—ish a pc orbs) beam torch and back light technology, this tool can enhance your visibility in the dark and help you read directions under poor light conditions.

TSR Luggage Strap Lock
The TSA Luggage Strap Lock is a must-for luggage protection—bars traveling. This item is used to bind luggage and suitcases and prevent them from loosening or getting destroyed—bile in transit. The luggage strap can be adjusted from 109 cm to 190 cm to fit all kinds of luggages and suitcases.

DSLR Camera Raincleeve
A must-have for travelers and photographers, this DSLR Camera Raincleeve lets you shoot every—here, even in—ll or moist conditions. The raincleeve has holes for the lens, viewfinder and for the hand.

Shop online at www.nationalbookstore.com
Follow National Book Store on Facebook and Twitter for exclusive offers and contests.

Samsung preps Asia ...

From page B1

KEEPING tabs on the Samsung Galaxy Tab 2 units in 7- and 10.1-inch variants

all-Share Play, the "link" that ties the user to three and share personal content across multiple devices (for example, smartphone to TV to tablet) regardless of location. Also, owners can now update their TV hardware and software yearly via the Evolution Kit (which can be plugged through a slot at the back of the TV). This pretty much obviates the need to spend for a new set every time an upgraded model comes out.

'Beam' me up, Samsung

As far as this gadget is concerned, your days of incurring price schoen's on computer up(s) bulky LCD projector for reports are numbered. The feisty beam is a smartphone with a built-in projector for multimedia content display of up to 50 inches wide.

You can turn any wall into an instant mini theater where photo slideshows to an audience, or do impromptu presentations in public. It runs on Android 2.3 Gingerbread OS and has a 1GHz dual-core processor, 8GB internal memory, microSD slot, and 5MP camera with flash.

Apart from the Galaxy Beam, we also got a sneak peek at the new Galaxy Tab 2 series in 7.0- and 10.1-inch models. They have essentially the same features as the original Tab series, but these run on the latest Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich (ICS) OS and have a microSD storage option of up to 32GB.

Plus, they offer upgrades like Google Play, 4ShBeam Play, video call and ChatON (Android's cross-platform communication service, much like BBM and Whatsapp, which works on iOS, Android and Bada platforms).

Travel buddies

Hello, instant upload. With the introduction of Samsung's WiFi-enabled cameras, there's no need to deal with the hassle of transferring your photos to your hard drive before you can store them or post them online. Format happy campers can use the dual-core DV300F's 3-inch LCD display to take their own snapshots or videos, and upload them to Facebook or YouTube via Social Sharing right away.

Meanwhile, the WB850F leads the pack of long zoom cameras that make for handy travel buddies. The 16mp 18.2MP Smart Camera is equipped with Z1x optical zoom, GPS/E-mirror, 3-inch WIS AMOLED screen, and 1080p (Full HD) video recording capability.

Light as a feather, thin as a board

Our where we thought laptops couldn't get any thinner, along comes the Notebook Series 9. Incredibly slim at half an inch, it comes in 13- and 15-inch sizes and weighs about 2 pounds, making it the most compact ultra-portable laptop in the market. For people who are afraid of breaking it just by touching it, the single-shell body is supposedly built with duralumin, "the same material as an advanced aircraft and is more strong as aluminum."

Perks include a backlit keyboard, a 128GB SSD (solid-state drive) that gives it speed, and its rapid boot-up/wake-up time. Plus, it's gorgeous as heck. Battery life already lasts for up to 10 hours, but we aren't be able to attest to that until we get our hands on this little beauty. Better start up for this one, though, because when it comes to electronics, beauty usually comes at a price.

Cleaning genie

We'd never thought we'd get excited over a vacuum cleaner, but we did. A mildew (moan with a bitch) is what this is. Or a cleaning genie in a bottle—er, this. As Samsung's next-gen cleaning robot, the 4-cm-tall Navibot S provides hands-free automated floor cleaning for people who just don't have the time or energy to do chores. All you really need to do is lift a finger (literally, Dirty, kids, it doesn't do dishes.)

It has an upgraded Visionary Mapping Plus system, a type of camera- and sensor-based navigation that enables the bot to capture images and create a map of your house, determining if best cleaning path, avoid obstacles and determine area and keep track of its progress. It even knows when its power supply is low, and it automatically goes back to its dock to recharge.

It comes with an Auto Dust Emptying function that lets it go back to its dock and dump its contents when it senses that the dust bin is full. It also has easy-to-use for "noise" that enable it to remote-know annoying noises and crannies, and they she pick up pet hair (check out the fun demo with the dog on the Samsung website). And, oh, it's WiFi-enabled, so you can just monitor it as you please. Amazing.

LIFESTYLE Travel

Please don't feed the big fish

Marine wildlife expert Dr. AA Yaptinchay is telling people why some 'ecotourism attractions' may be doing more harm than good

By Alya B. Honrado

MORE often than not, people are carried away by the novelty of it all. In a luxury resort, you pay a fee to fish a baby turtle out of a tank and "release" it into the wild. In Oslob, Cebu, people are going wild over the "touching" relationship between fishermen and the whale sharks they habitually feed.

"The animals are running after boats like hungry mutts, and people think it's cute," says Dr. Aniel "Ani" Yaptinchay, founder and

FILIPINO A2

Rimowa Philippines releases limited-edition Racing Green

RIMOWA, the Cologne-based premium luggage brand, has launched a new Limited-edition color, Salsa Racing Green, exclusively for Asia.

A new addition to Rimowa's widely acclaimed Salsa Collection, the Salsa Racing Green boasts lifestyle elegance and functionality for the discriminating traveler. In a unique and exciting new color, Rivery Salsa Racing Green runs true to the extremely robust and durable polycarbonate design that's become a trademark of the Salsa Collection. It is also equipped with the Rimowa Multiwheel® system that guarantees maximum mobility of the luggage.

RIMOWA'S Salsa Racing Green Series

members' exclusive

Whether for business or leisure, stay with us at the

Radisson BLU HOTEL CEBU

Special room rates

Php 4,500 /night

Superior Room (room only)

Php 5,500 /night

Superior Room inclusive of breakfast for two

Offer valid until July 31, 2012

Published room rates:
PT,810 for single occupancy
P8,080 for double occupancy

- Rates are quoted for Superior room, single or double occupancy
- Rooms are subject to availability, black out dates may apply
- Seven (7) days advance booking required
- Sbl Advantage, Sbl Prestige or BDO Rewards Card number must be given upon reservation
- Credit card guarantee required upon reservation
- Present your Sbl Advantage, Sbl Prestige or BDO Rewards Card upon check in
- Rooms can accommodate a maximum of 3 adults or 2 adults plus 2 children below 12 years old
- Rates are inclusive of service charge, VAT and local tax

Contact us at Sbl Advantage Hotline 902.210.888 (for Metro Manila)
1-800-10-210-8888 (for areas outside Metro Manila) or visit our website at www.sblhotelsga.com.ph

An oasis of luxury in the heart of Tokyo

The new Shangri-La rises like a quiet surprise. The guest is whisked up to the 28th floor lobby where one is greeted by the spectacular view of the city

ALL-ROOTED food: dynamic duos of Japanese and Italian flavors and modern-style sushi are the latest experiences

The Chi Spa at Shangri-La Hotel mixes up fusing ancient Chinese and Philippine healing therapies introduced in Japan for the first time. Its six treatment rooms are the largest spa suites in Tokyo.

"MESSAGE from Heaven," artist Hiroshi Senju's mixed-media installation by Baccarat Cherry hovered at the Hakuraku Japanese restaurant

THE 28th-floor lobby chandelier displays a cascading wall of sparkling raindrops.

By Luis Carlo Bautista

JUST a few meters from the iconic Tokyo train station, the new Shangri-La Tokyo is like a welcome oasis for the weary traveler. An escape from the hustle and bustle of downtown Tokyo, it is a place where one is welcomed by motivated staff and surrounded by the elegant ambience synonymous with the Shangri-La experience.

Upon arrival at Narita Airport, one can take the airport express and disembark at Tokyo station, where the hotel offers a complimentary "meet and greet" service. A hotel staff can meet the guest at the train platform and escort him or her to the hotel.

With its perfect location right at the heart of the city, the hotel is a walk away from the renowned shopping district of Ginza, the Tokyo metro subway lines of Marunouchi, Hibiya and Yurakucho, and the Imperial Gardens.

The guest is whisked up to the 28th floor of the new Marunouchi Trust Tower building, where the lobby is located, and which one is greeted by the spectacular views of the city. The Marunouchi business area, the Imperial Palace, Shinjuku's skyscrapers, and even Mt. Fuji in clear weather.

With the hotel's strategic vantage point occupying the last 13 floors of the Marunouchi Trust Tower, the hotel's 200 rooms also have unparalleled views of the cityscape, with a minimum space of 53 square meters, they are among the largest hotel rooms in Tokyo. The rooms reflect Japanese influences and modernity while luxurious appointments like the latest audiovisual and communication facilities, including free Wi-Fi.

A museum in itself

Art lovers can also admire the hotel's 2,000 pieces of artwork by Japanese, Chinese and Western artists exclusively made for Shangri-La Tokyo. These include notable works by 98 year-old Japanese artist Yoko Shimada and an eggshell ceramic mural by Chinese artist Chen Jun.

Also, the four ballrooms of Shangri-La Tokyo are its chandeliers, with more than 30 adorning the hotel. Its main chandelier installation: par homage to the city of Tokyo, showcasing intricately curved crystal pieces in the shape of ginkgo leaves, the symbol of the city. 42 chandeliers were handmade using the finest crystals from Venice and the Czech Republic.

Shangri-La Tokyo, which opened on March 2, 2009, has already been named top luxury hotel in the world by TripAdvisor's Travelers' Choice Award for 2011; it's also the first hotel in Japan to receive this recognition. Shangri-La Tokyo surpassed hotels from 30 countries.

Tokyo has always been a captivating city, and Shangri-La Tokyo can only add to that magic.

Please don't feed the big fish

From page E1

director of Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines, the nonprofit, nonstock organization that veterinarian and conservation student founded in September 2010 to help people develop a better understanding of the marine environment.

Tupinchay has made social networking—specifically, Facebook—his main platform, and he's reaching thousands of people who otherwise would have no idea why it's now a bad idea—may, almost criminal—to eat shark's fin soup.

"Conservation should have an educational aspect to it. Unfortunately, a lot of people are not interested in being educated; they just want to be entertained. What people don't understand is that whale sharks have a complex life cycle; they migrate, swimming as far as Taiwan and Vietnam, and spend a lot of time at depth. If you change that, you affect not only their migratory habits, but even their reproduction and instincts for survival, and you put them in danger."

In short, those 15-ft puppies may think every hand is a friendly one—and may one day mix into one of the many shark fishermen who still prey on them for their fins—to dangle those magnificent creatures for their fins.

Meanwhile, Tupinchay cautions, turtle hatchlings have to be out at sea within three to five days of emerging from their nests, to get the important nutrients they need to survive here and to get on with their complex life cycles as the gardeners of the sea. "If you put them in a tank, how is that supposed to happen?"

Endangered

The fact is, all turtles in Philippine waters have been classified as endangered by the Philippine Wildlife Act, with Hawksbill species (Eretmochelys imbricata) being critically endangered. "In short, nobody should have a turtle in captivity but because of lack of enforcement, nobody does. We see a lot of misguided environments, and it has become part of the culture rather than the solution."

In what usually makes a good ecotourism destination? "We look at three factors," says Tupinchay. "There's the natural component. There's the community; somehow the local community should benefit from the tourism business. And finally, the visitor should be educated and come away with something."

Reality, however, often means a compromise. "Tourism is always a business, and for that you need infrastructure, services, attractions, accessibility. This all the tourists, but a balance can be struck."

Tupinchay knows whereof he speaks. After earning his veterinary medicine degree from the University of the Philippines in 1993, he spent seven his first job with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Marine Turtle Conservation Project, living and working in the Turtle Islands, one of the Philippines' most isolated protected areas and one of the Asian region's last major nesting and breeding areas of marine turtles. "Working with turtles was a life-changing experience," he says. "Because I'm still at it, 20 years later."

He went on to work for the renowned conservation organization, World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) Philippines, becoming director of the Marine Species Conservation Program, during which he also earned a master's degree in international studies in aquatic tropical ecology from the University of Western, Germany.

DR. ARNEL "NAY" Tupinchay, founder and director of Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines

A brief burnout saw Tupinchay changing tack and establishing a travel agency in 2000, which is how he got his foot very wet as a tourism operator. But the problems of the community, but of the whole nation, as if I wanted a change, the whole nation had to change. That's why I decided to try something else," he says of the hiatus from saving the seas.

Still, "conservation wouldn't leave me," he adds with a laugh. Colleagues were still consulting him often as a consultant wildlife expert, one of a handful in the Philippines, an irony in a country that is an archipelago entwined by water.

Today through Marine Wildlife Watch Philippines, he has already partnered with the DENR and the Coastal Resources Ecosystems Program's (CREP) on projects, including a manual for coastal communities on how to rescue a marine creature in distress.

Save, cute species

Tupinchay is quite straightforward about his goal. "To conserve the sexy cute species like turtles, dolphins, whales, and sharks to make people appreciate the ecology more, and realize we're all connected."

Facebook has been a boon in this academician who enjoys lecturing and passionately explaining the complex life cycles of such creatures to even the most casual Tupinchay challenges. "If you can allow a captive dolphin to swim 1,500 miles deep, or the bandwidth of miles a day it needs to swim—if you can build a cage that big, then fix off oceans, do it."

Like their FB page: Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines.

How to be a responsible water tourist

1) Always practice respect. You are intruding into the marine animal's world, and the other way around. Don't litter, disobey signs, or make too much noise. Don't harm any animal or do anything to interrupt their feeding it, hurting it, or capturing it and bringing it with you.

2) Read up. Educate yourself. Understand what kind of impact you're making on the ocean, and teach your kids.

3) Watch the garbage! "Trash is one of the single biggest problems to our islands and coasts brought by tourism," says Tupinchay. Try to live in a sustainable way—reduce your waste, buy local consumer goods, and live the minimum times, don't throw cigarette butts or plastic bags in the ocean. We already know they can kill.

4) Don't support facilities that pretend to know what they're doing. Other facilities are practicing incorrect initiatives and have to be spotted; others are very much aware and just want to make money in the guise of environmentalism, notes Tupinchay. Be a discriminating tourist.

ISLA CATALINA Church in Arnao

Visita Iglesia tour set this Holy Week

THIS Holy Week, leading tour transportation company, Victory Liner, is organizing Buses being Victory's Visita Iglesia Road Trip, so that Filipinos may experience the depth of the Christian faith.

The trip is the mandate of Jesus of Nazareth Victory, a series of group tours introduced by Victory Liner.

In partnership with Travel Sector, one of the biggest adventure tour providers in the country, Nasbeng Victory brings people to the ecotourist attractions of destinations reached by Victory Liner.

Nasbeng Victory's Visita Iglesia is a one-day trip that brings sightseers to the town of Obando both in Bulacan. It covers seven magnificent churches in Pampanga.

The tour will begin at the Metropolitan Cathedral in San Fernando, the seat of the Archdiocese of San Fernando. A quick breakfast in the Jasmine Everybody's Cafe follows.

Then the tour heads to the limestone Cotta Mountain and the Betis Church in Guagua. The former was built in 1772 and boasts a magnificent altar created by the renowned wood sculptor Willy Layug. Betis Church is called the "Sistine Chapel of the Philippines" for its Basilica wall and ceiling murals. It is also one of the oldest churches in the province.

Next stop is the San Guillermo Parish Church in Bacolor. The church, which survived the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, is a celebration of Baroque and Romanesque styles. Lunch follows at Cucina ni Mahing Lihan Bacolores, home of the famous San Nicolas Cookies.

The tour will proceed to the 727-year-old St. Ana Church with its two-story bell tower. Next stop is the Sts. Catalina Church in Arayat, with its miraculous image of Jesus Christ in the sepulchre.

Last stop is the Holy Rosary Church in Angeles, which served as a military hospital during the Filipino-American War.

Before returning in Manila, the tour stops for merienda at Historic Candelaria Restaurant, the home of the famous Aniceto's Pizza.

Nasbeng Victory's Visita Iglesia Tour will be on April 5 starting at 8:30 a.m. and will be back in Manila at 9 p.m. Cost is P1,600.

For information, please call Jaime of Asia of Travel Sector at (632) 741.1110, 3837.9475,3307 or e-mail at marc@travelsector.ph. You may also visit the Travel Sector website at www.travelsector.org, like us at facebook.com/Spanergisticsyard and follow us at twitter.com/travelsupremacy.

METROPOLITAN Cathedral of San Fernando

Unique Easter safari adventure in Baguio

THE MANOR at Camp John Hay hosts a Safari Adventure this Easter season, from April 2 to 8, 2012.

Little adventurers will enjoy a garden safari with mascots, play grounds, farm animals and birds at The Manor Garden. Tweens can enjoy the Tree Top Adventure, Eco Trail, catching Butterfly Investigator and Amaze Picnic Boxes, among others.

Various outdoor activities for adults are be had, among them: shopping for freshly picked farm fruits and vegetables at the Friendship Garden, an Easter sale on eggs, crafts, homecare, vintage items and batteries at the Garden Wing of the Old John Hay Trails and Culture Center; a painting exhibit by Ina Rhodes at The North Spire; a sculpture exhibit by world renowned artist Arthur Villanueva with some Bendos and Ifik on display at The Rose Garden; and fortune-telling by Madame Delfa at The North Foyer.

Palm Sunday Mass will be held 6-7 a.m., along with a hotel-organized Visita Iglesia pilgrimage on Maundy Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m., inclusive of shuttle services and tour guide for only P2,100 per double. There's also a Via Crucis on Good Friday at the historical Cross and an Easter Rosary Mass at 6 to 8 a.m. on April 8.

Live entertainment will be provided by Los Amigos Trio, Children Band, Ms Sidy Angel Pasaoa on the Harp, and Spirit of Jamboree, an Irish band.

The Manor's Easter Egg Hunt happens on Easter Sunday, 9 a.m. 12 noon, at the Amphitheater for only P600 per person, inclusive of Easter Egg Hunt, Games, Packed Lunch and Easter loot bags and goodies.

Chef Billy Xing and his team at Le Chef at The Manor, serve-inside hosts a daily breakfast buffet, international selections, a variety of strawberry flavored juice drinks and snacks, an array of seafood choices on Good Friday and an Easter Sunday spread.

Freshly baked Easter goodies, chocolates, pralines, breads and sweet temptations are also available at Le Chef Delicatessen.

The Manor at Camp John Hay is located at Loakan Road, Baguio City. For reservations and inquiries, please call 445-0888, 445-0915, 447-8718, 447-8155, 447-8156 or visit www.campjohnhay.ph.

TO THE GRADUATES OF 2012

CONGRATULATIONS!

MARID'S REWARD FOR THE EAGER BEAVERS.

Get the Best Guarantee against Bill Shock with Globe P999 Data Bill Cap

Bill shock is a term used to describe the feeling of surprise and anxiety when a consumer receives a bill that is much higher than expected. It is a common problem in the Philippines, where many people are not aware of the high cost of using their mobile phones for data services. Globe Telecom has introduced a new plan called the Globe P999 Data Bill Cap, which guarantees that customers will never pay more than P999 for their data usage, no matter how much they use. The plan is available to all Globe postpaid subscribers and can be activated by sending a text message to 8888. Customers can also check their data usage and remaining balance by sending a text message to 8888. The plan is valid for one month and can be renewed automatically or manually. Globe Telecom has also introduced a new plan called the Globe P999 Data Bill Cap, which guarantees that customers will never pay more than P999 for their data usage, no matter how much they use. The plan is available to all Globe postpaid subscribers and can be activated by sending a text message to 8888. Customers can also check their data usage and remaining balance by sending a text message to 8888. The plan is valid for one month and can be renewed automatically or manually.

Your Mastercard can get you the VIP treatment at Singapore Indoor Stadium

MASTERCARD customers and cardholders will enjoy the exclusivity reserved for VIPs on game days of the country's new tie-up with the Singapore Indoor Stadium (SIS) in an agreement brokered by World Sport Group.

MasterCard's sponsorships of Singapore's iconic venue means its valued guests will get to enjoy the full benefits of the exclusive SIS VIP Lounge before and after shows, as well as direct access to their VIP seats via the lounge, with access also to parking via a private driveway. The VIP Lounge, now renamed the MasterCard Lounge, is the first of its kind at the SIS.

MasterCard cardholders will further enjoy the convenience of card acceptance at the stadium's food and beverage via concessionaires, as well as a priority line for expedited service.

The sponsorship of the SIS joins a reputable suite of MasterCard global sponsorship assets, including the MasterCard Center in Beijing, a leading entertainment and sports venue which was used for the 2008 Olympic Games, and the MasterCard Center for Ice Hockey Excellence in Toronto.

"The past 12 months have been incredibly successful for the Singapore Indoor Stadium, with an impressive lineup of international acts and sporting events offering something for everyone," said Mark Collins, Managing Director, Singapore Indoor Stadium. "We are delighted that MasterCard has come on board."

"The Singapore Indoor Stadium is one of the region's premier sports and entertainment venues and MasterCard is proud to have formed a strategic alliance with the SIS for the benefit of its invited cardholders and customers," said Ronnie Cameron, vice president, Regional Marketing, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa, MasterCard Worldwide.

Over the years, nearly five million people have attended more than 1,000 events at the Singapore Indoor Stadium, making it Asia's favorite venue for sports and live entertainment. It is one of the landmark facilities located within Singapore Sports Hub.

It has hosted numerous international artists, sports events, family entertainment and awards ceremonies.

OUR GIFT TO YOU

We would like to invite you to discover the Luxury Professional In-Salon Treatment. Indulge in pampering yourself with the latest innovation from Kérastase—FUSIO-DOSE, complimentary at Kérastase with every in-salon service availed in participating salons nationwide.

FUSIO-DOSE is the first system of highly concentrated active ingredients freshly mixed by the hairdresser. For more information on FUSIO-DOSE, log on to hairdresser.societekerastase.com

To receive the complimentary treatment from Kérastase, bring this voucher to any of the participating salons between April 15 to 21, 2012 when you avail of in-salon services such as color, rebond, perm, relax and similar chemical services.

KÉRASTASE PARIS

NAME:

SALON:

IN-SALON SERVICE: (E.G. COLOR, REBOND, PERM)

KÉRASTASE FUSIO-DOSE (TO BE FILLED BY STYLIST)

FUSIO-DOSE CONCENTRATE:

FUSIO-DOSE BOOSTER:

Kérastase Consumer Hotline: (632) 672-7202

Recherche Avancée L'Oréal

Lovely vistas, endless food and shopping, 22 spas in one mall—hey, it's Busan

South Korea's second largest city, only three hours away from Manila via Cebu Pacific, is an R&R haven

UNLIKE most temples built on mountains, Yonggungsa Temple is perched on a cliff—one of the few major Buddhist temples in Korea.

By Jovic Yee

FOR ACROPHOBICS like me, standing at least what is hundred feet above the ground takes a lot of guts. But the exhilarating view from the Busan Tower of the city's well-preserved mountains, amid the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, replaces fear with bliss and amazement.

Although it's a huge and progressive city with a population of about four million, Busan, remarkably, has been able to preserve its environment and heritage.

South Korea is no longer an alien country to Filipinos, most a lot of us are hooked on K-Pop stars, tamers, and Kimchi-vibes. Now that Cebu Pacific has added Busan, South Korea's second largest city, to its list of international flights, the three-hour travel from Manila has become even more affordable.

Inside Busan Tower's observation platform, which gives tourists and tourists a 360-degree view of the city at 120 ft, Busan's second urban planning is made apparent. Though tribute pyramids crowd Busan's landscape, the linkage to its mountains is still quite a sight.

Vibrant history

This city has much to offer: vibrant history and culture side by side with modernization, an upbeat coastal economy, and great shopping and dining experiences.

Busan Tower is home to Yongdusan Park, a mountain park that resembles a dragon's head, hence the name Yongdusan. Yongda means dragon, and san, mountain.

Also in the park is the picturesque Busan Tower, the 12-m bronze statue of Adm. Lee Sun-sin, a famous naval commander who won various battles against the Japanese navy during the Imjin war of the 16th century and the nearby 4-m high Citizen's Bell of Busan, which is rung four times a year on New Year's Day, Independence Movement Day, Liberation Day, and Armed Forces Day.

Further south in Yeongdo Island, we stopped at Taejongdae Park. It's a 10-minute ride on an automatic carriage to reach the park from the base of the mountain. There are target pick-up points every 200 meters.

From the park, it's an easy descent to view the rocky cliffs of Taejongdae. Halfway through the descent is a viewing deck. At this point, those who don't want to go further can stop here and enjoy the panorama of the East Sea. But I decided to descend further and good thing I did. Standing at the edge of the cliff, I was in awe of the breath-taking vista—the wide open sea, a couple of ships passing by, the cold sea breeze in my face.

As we were approaching bike lanes up, and I was sweating in my thermal jacket. But the experience was one for the books.

Cliff temple, popular beach

Heading toward the northeastern portion of Busan, we were transported back in time as we visited Haedong Yonggungsa Temple—a unique one in that it's perched on a cliff next to the coast.

Before reaching the gate of the temple, we were welcomed by 12 guardians—the 12 Shin-jang zodiac signs of the Chinese zodiac. Here, a lot of people take the opportunity to snap a shot with their birth animal.

The gate is adorned with four gold, or lion, representing the four directions: joy, anger, sadness and happiness. And to reach the temple, we had to go down 108 steps, every step said to represent freedom from the torments plaguing mortals, therefore bringing us closer to enlightenment.

Just a few steps away from the gate is a Buddha statue with a blackened belly. Our guide Grace told us that if we wanted to have a baby boy, all we had to do was rub the Buddha's belly. Well, by the looks of it, a lot of visitors have seen to want a baby boy.

As we emerged from the last steps of the hundred-filled trail, Yonggungsa Temple finally revealed itself. Painted in traditional red and blue colors, the pagoda-style temple sat perfectly on the cliff. Too bad we didn't catch the sunrise, a moment one shouldn't miss, we were told. That's why a lot of people come here on New Year's Day, to watch the sun rise and make a wish for the coming year.

There's one beach in Busan that, at this time of year, has temperatures ranging between four degrees and seven degrees Celsius. But during summer, the would-be Haeundae Beach's mocha-colored shore is packed with people.

Still, despite the cold weather and the rain-ridden sea breeze, a lot of people take a stroll on the shore. Since it's not a good idea to swim, we just made do with kite-flying. Another fun activity you would do is feed the seagulls along the shore.

Shopping Fiesta

The must-best thing to visiting temples and picturesque destinations in this port city is shopping.

If you love to bring pasalubong, Gaijo Market is the place. It has a wide assortment of cute, inexpensive and quality products. Some were street and you'll find something from souvenirs to herbal products.

It's better to look around first before buying. Many stores sell the same items at much lower prices, and those-ties, noodles and other local items are best bought in convenience stores and groceries.

Once you find an item, don't forget to say "kalsa jusoyo" (please give a discount) and smile. Some give bigger discounts if you compliment them with "yuppeo" (beautiful) or "mas-si seoyo" (handsome). After purchasing, don't forget to say "kamsahamnida" (thank you).

For more shopping options, you can always go to Lotte Department Store, which is practically everywhere. But Lotte Gwangbok is particularly famous. Aside from the wide variety of brands, entertainment facilities and high-tech gadgets there, it has a 11-minute indoor musical water fountain show played at exactly 12 noon.

To cap the shopping experience, visit the world's largest department store, Shinsegae Mall in Centum City which offers leisure and cultural facilities, a skating rink, and a multiplex theater.

A must-try in Shinsegae is its Spa Land. For only $12 on weekdays and $14 on weekends, shoppers can enjoy for four hours the 22 spas fed by two all-natural spring-waters, the 13 diamond-cleansed Jacuzzi-type and steam, and the open-air foot spa.

I tried dipping in the sodium bicarbonate hot spring, called "the beauty bathtub" for it removes dead skin cells and makes skin and hair shiny. A word of caution, though: make sure to look at the electronic temperature signages beside each tub before dipping in. Each tub varies in temperature, ranging from 22 degrees to 42 degrees Celsius.

The experience was so relaxing that I didn't notice the time. Plus, despite the number of people inside, it was relatively quiet, you would hear only the gushing water and some small chatter.

Those who want to improve their blood circulation are advised to try the sodium chloride hot spring. But whatever one's sauna preference, there's something to suit his or her taste.

Other favorites here are the Roman sauna, which recreates the ancient Roman bath, and the Finnish sauna.

Ah, the food

A tour of South Korea's largest trading port wouldn't be complete without tasting uniquely Busan flavors.

Wok-tang Seo's "Yangnyeom Galbi," for instance—seasoned beef grilled to your taste—served in vinegar and green onion leaves, this dish requires heavy chomping as the octopus' suction cups may stick to your palate, cheek or throat.

Likewise, though it has opened branches in Manila, Sulgeup Restaurant in Busan is a different experience.

While Sulgeup is certainly in the menu, there's also mibaengi, a superb combination of Sulgeup, a variety of vegetables, egg and rice. Perfect if with the fresh strawberry shake and it's definitely a full meal.

After a long day of sightseeing, shopping and gastronomic exploration in Busan, we took a well-deserved rest at Seaschool Hotel. This hotel is a three-minute walk away from Haeundae Beach, with some choice rooms with a view of the beach.

Cebu Pacific flies four times weekly from Manila to Busan at a one-round fare of P12,999.

HAEUNDAE'S multi-colored chairs overwhelm Busan's skyline.

EXHAUSTED from shopping? Take a snack in one of those food stalls that are found in the inner streets of Gaijo Market.

(FROM top) Patients can have sashimi sliced and drenched in vinegar and green onion leaves; Bibimbap

YONGDUSAN Park is home to the Busan Tower and the bronze statue of Adm. Lee Sun-sin; above, a round-bottomed and tasteful prayer room inside the Yonggungsa Temple.

Plan and book your summer vacation today

Now is the best time to travel with family and friends to see more of the Philippines, or visit other countries you have always wanted to explore.

Reserve your airline tickets or book a tour package using your Citibank Credit Card, and pay for your vacation in light and easy installments suited to your needs. Citibank is offering as low as 0.5% percent monthly add-on rate for nine, 12, 18 and 24-month terms.

Take advantage of this PayLite offer that you can avail of for single receipt purchases starting at P3,000. Fly to Boracay or Palawan this summer, and get captivated once more by the beauty of the country's beaches. Visit your kids in Universal Studios in Singapore, or the new attractions in Hong Kong Disneyland.

Turn your dream vacation in the US into a reality, make the European tour you have been planning for happen, or take that pilgrimage you wanted to do at least once in your life this year. The seats do not have to be a burden, as you can stretch your payments into longer installments.

For a P80,000 tour or airfare, you get to pay equal monthly installments of only P5,724.99 for 12 months with the 0.5% percent add-on rate.

Citibank PayLite also offers light payment options at 1.00 percent add-on rate per month if you choose to pay your vacation package or airline ticket in three or six months. That's an easy on the budget P5,386.66 per month installment for six months for P58,000 charged to your credit card.

Book your getaways with Citibank's partner travel agencies in Silverstar Manila and Cebu to maximize your budget and enjoy PayLite. For a complete list of accredited travel agencies and to know more about this PayLite offer, call the 24-hour Citi-Phone at tel. no. 995-9999 or visit www.citibank.com.ph.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY Special

Kriscl
0922-3034066

ano pa'ng
hinihintay mo?
tawag na
now na!

introducing
TRI-NET30
the only offer that lets you call to smart, sun, t-van, and globe, too.
50 minutes of calls to 3 networks
100 all-net texts
P30/day
text TRINET30 to 2477
also available: TRI-NET30

SMART
LIVE MORE

Seeing double in the movies

OLSENS. Mary-Kate and Ashley in "The Parent Trap" remake

By Nestor U. Torre

SACK & ALL," Adam Sandler's latest movie, is by no means the only film about twins. Most famously—and offensively—Eugene Mills played separated twins who met at camp and plotted to bring their divorced parents back together in 1961's "The Parent Trap."

The movie was so successful that it was remade, even more endearingly, in 1998, starring the very young and gifted Lindsay Lohan, who did a great job teaming as different characterizations as the lively American twin and her more sophisticated British counterpart.

A comic parody involving several movies of identical twins separated at birth during the French Revolution, "Dave's Gone the Revolution Without Me," stars Gene Wilder and Donald Sutherland.

In the "Harry Potter" movies, the Weasley twins were played in the first three installments of the vastly popular film franchise by real-life twins, James and Oliver Phelps.

In "A Merry Mix-up" (1937), the Three Stooges portrayed three sets of triplets who were separated at birth.

Good girl

In "Twin Fish Mission" (2004), Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen are featured, with Mary-Kate playing the wilder sister and Ashley cast as the good girl.

"Slapstick" (1984) cast Jerry Lewis and Madeleine Kahn as parents who find out they each have twins...who are aliens from mainly as planet

"Road Big, Steal Little"—Andy Garcia plays both roles in this comedy about a twin and his more-popular brother.

"Struck on You"—a comedy about conjoined twins, played by Matt Damon and Greg Kinnear.

In "Blonder Than" (1985), a young stylish lad—raised since a newborn, and his ghost urges his twin brother to seek revenge—!

The twin horror hosts could more readily to comedic treatment, but it's also figured prominently in a number of dramas. In "Suspicions," Nicolas Cage portrays real-life screenwriter Charlie Kaufman, as well as his fictional twin brother, Donald, in a story about writer's block.

"Dark Mirror" (1946) is a murder mystery about a woman who is accused of a murder that may have been committed by her twin sister. Olivia de Havilland portrayed both roles.

In "Dominique and Eugenie," Ben Hoke plays a close-mired garbageman who puts his intact twin brother (Ray Liotta) through multiple ordeals.

In "Double Trouble," the Hall twins, David and Peter, play characters on the opposite side of the law who team up to foil a crime lord.

In "Equinox," Matthew Modine plays twins who meet an oddity of the fantasy between raised in very different environments.

Revelations

"A Kiss Before Dying"—a remake's investigation into her twin sister's apparent suicide leads to startling revelations about her own husband.

"Million Dollar Babies"—about the exploitation of the Dionne quintuplets.

"It Takes Life" (1944)—Bette Davis plays a twin who takes her drowned sister's place in the wife of a man (Glenn Ford) both of them had fought over.

"Dead Ringer"—in David Cronenberg's horror film, Jeremy Irons plays the twin Mantle brothers, gynecologists who share and share alike.

"The Girls of Rogerfeet" is a French musical that stars Catherine Deneuve and Frances Dorleac as twin actors.

And, in "Here Come the Waves" (1944), Betty Hutton stars as twin sisters, Sonn and Rosemary—both of whom are being renewed by Bing Crosby!

Martin Nievera springs a surprise in latest OPM album

By Rito P. Asido

THE PROLIFIC Martin Nievera possesses one of the best pipes in the country. Having said that, however, we must admit that it's been awhile since a recording of his has fully engaged us—until "Mga Awit at Dinakamin." As his latest album proves, Martin still has a few tricks up his musical sleeve—and that's all to the good.

The new recording sees the country's top balladeer revisiting growth—though it isn't without flaws. Just the same, it manages to discard a good number of his previous recordings' sins of commission—most notably the overlay of reverb that has given his voice, however well-sung, a "cavernous" sound.

In documentary, Martin draws to his revivals of Ruiz J. Perez's "Kapalaran" and Eugene Velasquez's "Nasaksihan," because his judicious use of echo deserves their homage—they don't just sound like complete songs that need to be handled. Besides, not everyone is blessed with the unique range and skill of Ruiz's daughter, who can take a challenging tune to its unimaginable heights and will sound effortless.

Final track

Another off-putting aspect of the balladeer's performances is his penchant for vocal hesitancy, which makes listening to his repertoire not only cumbersome, but also occasionally tedious. If you are partial to this type of singing, his rendition of "Ikaw Lamang" (from "Naman Ko, Gino?"), the session-snapping final track, will get your ears singing—and nevertheless.

But not every song in the richly diverse OPM canon has to be sung in a concrete piece o in "Ikaw Ang Lahat Sa Akin" or "Kahit Isang Saglit"—you can't get any more melodrama than that!

Take Nievera's cover of Vic Hernandez's "Ganang Mealis," he initially sings it like a soothing balm, but wraps it up with an unnecessary excess of mellisma that are better heard in a show-stopping piece, not in a short but sweet romance's anthem about a guy who wakes up at sunrise to an exhilarating realization about his beloved.

NEUTRAL. Nievera growth in "Mga Awit at Dinakamin."

Impeccable taste

The track listing softens the balladeer's impeccable taste in OPM, with hard-to-say choices that include Basil Valdez's "Ngayon at Kailanman," Ogie Alcasid's "Sa Kuya," Onnyboy Asuncion's "Bakit Labo Iisang Mahal?," Vinny Cascaye's "Walang May Bukas," Tito Nardy's "Yung Sa Lang Kaya," Regi Magundayao "Ang Lahat Ng Sa'Yo Ay Sa Iyo," and Pasco's "Kapitbar Kanaw."

Martin has been in the music biz since the '80s—and his treasure trove of experiences reflects this. His talent fueled by supportive skill and time-honed musicality are less demonstrated in his breathtaking cover of Anthony Castelo's "Humapit Ka"—which will leave you asking for more!

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

For ticket reservations and screening schedule pls. visit: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

Like us on

Follow us on

GALLERIA

1. THE HUNGER GAMES
2. THE HUNGER GAMES in Digital 2D
3. THE HUNGER GAMES
4. THE HUNGER GAMES in Digital 2D
5. THE HUNGER GAMES

6. THE MUPPETS in Digital 3D
7. MIRROR MIRROR
8. THE ODYSSEY
9. DR. SEUSS' THE LORAX / DUMA LANGITOK
10. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)

MANILA

1. JOHN CARTER
2. THE HUNGER GAMES in Digital 2D
3. THE MUPPETS in Digital 3D
4. THE HUNGER GAMES
5. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
6. THE HUNGER GAMES
7. MIRROR MIRROR / THE MUPPETS

METRO EAST

1. THE HUNGER GAMES
2. THE MUPPETS in Digital 3D
3. MIRROR MIRROR
4. THE HUNGER GAMES
5. THE MUPPETS
6. JOHN CARTER
7. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
8. DR. SEUSS' THE LORAX

NOVALICHES

1. THE HUNGER GAMES
2. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
3. THE MUPPETS
4. MIRROR MIRROR / THE MUPPETS (LIVE)

FORUM ROBINSONS

1. THE MUPPETS in Digital 3D
2. THE HUNGER GAMES
3. THE HUNGER GAMES
4. MIRROR MIRROR

GET A CHANCE TO WIN ANY OF THESE GADGETS FOR EVERY TWO (2) TICKET PURCHASE!

Promo runs from March 23 to April 8, 2012.

BUY YOUR PURCHASED TICKETS ONLINE:
www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

Powered by MOVIEWORLD

STA. ROSA

1. THE MUPPETS in Digital 3D
2. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
3. RESERVED
4. MIRROR MIRROR
5. THE HUNGER GAMES

LIPA

1. THE MUPPETS in Digital 3D
2. THE HUNGER GAMES
3. RESERVED
4. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
5. JOHN CARTER / MIRROR MIRROR

CASAMBALAS

1. THE HUNGER GAMES in Digital 2D
2. THE HUNGER GAMES
3. THE MUPPETS
4. MIRROR MIRROR
5. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)

STARMALLS

1. THE HUNGER GAMES in Digital 2D
2. MIRROR MIRROR / JOHN CARTER
3. THE MUPPETS
4. MY SWEETHEARTED GIRL
5. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
6. THE HUNGER GAMES

IMUS

1. RESERVED
2. JOHN CARTER
3. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
4. THE HUNGER GAMES in Digital 2D
5. RESERVED
6. THE HUNGER GAMES

TACLOBAN

1. THE HUNGER GAMES
2. MIRROR MIRROR
3. THE MUPPETS
4. RESERVED
5. JOHN CARTER

ILOCOS NORTE

1. THE HUNGER GAMES
2. MIRROR MIRROR
3. THE HUNGER GAMES

DUMAGUETE

1. THE HUNGER GAMES
2. MIRROR MIRROR
3. THE HUNGER GAMES

BACOLOD

1. THE MUPPETS in Digital 3D
2. THE HUNGER GAMES
3. THE HUNGER GAMES
4. MIRROR MIRROR
5. WITHERED SOUID AND SHOCKING (1 CLOSE)
6. JOHN CARTER
7. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)

ILOILO

1. THE MUPPETS in Digital 3D
2. DJ TUNES (1 CLOSE AND INCREDIBLE (1 CLOSE) / MIRROR MIRROR
3. THE HUNGER GAMES
4. THE HUNGER GAMES
5. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
6. JOHN LOST 3D

GENSAN

1. THE HUNGER GAMES in Digital 2D
2. THE HUNGER GAMES
3. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
4. MY SWEETHEARTED GIRL

ANGELES

1. THE HUNGER GAMES
2. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
3. THE MUPPETS
4. THE HUNGER GAMES

CALASIAO

1. THE HUNGER GAMES
2. CORAZON KING (KUNG KONYOK)
3. RESERVED
4. RESERVED

www.sminema.com

SM CINEMA

Like us on Facebook

IMAX

SM MALL OF ASIA
JOHN CARTER
SM SOUTHMALL
LORAX

SM NORTH EDSA
SM SOUTHMALL
LORAX

HUNGER GAMES

metro manila

SM NORTH EDSA
SM MALL OF ASIA
SM MEGAMALL
SM CITY MANILA
SM AURORA
SM CITY BAY LAZARO
SM CITY STA. ROSA
SM SOUTHMALL
SM MANDALUYONG
SM CITY BICUTAN

luzon

SM CITY PAMPANGA
SM CITY LIPA
SM CITY LUCENA
SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
SM CITY SAN PABLO
SM CITY SAN JOSE
SM CITY BATANGAS
SM CITY STA. ROSA
SM CITY BACOOR
SM CITY TARLAC
SM BALIWAG
SM CITY CLARK
SM CITY OLONGAPO
SM ROSALES
SM BUNAWAN

visayas + mindanao

SM CITY DAVAO
SM CITY CEBU
SM CITY ILOILO
SM CAGAYAN DE ORO

HOTLINE: 470-2222 / WEBSITE: www.smcinema.com

VISIT www.sminema.com AND PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS ONLINE.
PAYMENT VIA CREDIT CARDS AND SELL MAYOR CREDIT CARDS ARE ACCEPTED.

OFFERS A WIDE VARIETY OF FOOD AND DRINKS AT ALL SM CINEMA LOBBIES

Dustin Hoffman makes directing debut . . .

From page F4

Dustin, who began acting in 1960, talked passionately about "Quartet's" theme. "What the movie is about is a debunking of the myth of one's third act," stressed the actor whose home-earning drama, "Lenny," was recently canceled after school authorities injected and put down during production.

"The third act in our culture is celebrity," he said. "We are invisible. It's about a body of people who, in this case, happen to be musicians and opera singers who aren't fazed by their physical limitations. They refuse to leave. You also see that in 'Tuesai's Kiss.' There's a trumpet player who's 80, and a jazz pianist who's old. The name of it is, do not go gentle into that good night. Where we die, die singing. Die doing your art; die doing what you love...and there is great victory in it. The last's a movie where you smell the artist as you do when you go to most morning homes."

E-mail rvmedia.5385@inbox.com. Follow http://twitter.com/rapplerbuzz.

'Project. . .'

From page F4

a priest. He turned to friends who taught him the art of jewelry-making and eventually, he formed himself designing clothes.

Bobbie Guerrero, 21, is the Muslim convenient. She's pursuing a degree in fashion arts. Glenn Gervasio, 26, is musically impaired. He only has one good eye due to congenital glaucoma.

Final parties

All 15 contestants were at the launch of the show last Monday at the Corinthian Club. There was a preview of tomorrow's premiere episode, but they didn't show the final portion when the judges decide who's leaving the show.

Naturally, the first episode proceeded like an artistic drama. Female director Heidi de Leeuw has 5,000 hours of video that he has shot with the use of seven cameras, running 3000 tapes each day.

After tomorrow, only 14 will be left, and each week, one designer will be asked to leave...until only one is left standing. Among other prizes, the winner will get half a million pesos, sewing machines and worth P500,000, and an all-expense-paid trip in Paris for Fashion Week.

Young viewers speak up–for a change

By Nestor U. Torre

MOST OF the time, when it comes to "child friendly" television, it's the adult "experts" who have to say on the subject, while the opinions of young viewers are generally ignored. They're "just kids," therefore they don't really know what's good or bad for them —that seems to be the hidden principle at work.

Last week, however, the National Council for Children's Television (NCCT), chaired by Meg Cruz Hand, changed the conversation and debate in a key way by asking the "experts" to step aside for a while, and listen to a group of children from all over the country as they evaluated a number of shows from their youthful perspective.

Hard time

Some of the adults present had a hard time getting used to the idea of shutting up and listening for a change—but, to their time, the kids were allowed to make their points, and some of the adults present were surprised and even shocked by their responses.

Yes, they were still occasionally "immature" and even "still acting" ("we're just kids, we want more cartoons!"). But, they were also sometimes mature and perceptive, far from the silly or ear-shocks opinions that some members of the ABC audience may have been expecting. ...If these kids are the future of the fatherland, we have nothing to fear!

To be sure, some of the juvenile respondents came up with "politically correct" and even sermonized responses...but, the majority spoke from the mind and heart, and made us realize that there's a small work to be done on local TV by way of truly child-friendly shows, if the industry is to serve its young viewership as it deserves to be responsibly entertained, informed and inspired.

In that regard, it was disturbing to realize that many good shows for kids are no longer being produced! In their place are more "popular" programs that actually demean and exploit children, while laughing all the way to the bank.

Programming

Many channels aren't even following the letter of the law, let alone its spirit, when it comes to good programming for children, to—obviously—need to work much harder, because nothing less than the country's future is at stake.

The recent dialogue sponsored by the NCCT is only the first step in effecting industry-wide reforms that will redound to the good of the country's millions of young viewers. It's reassuring to note that the new board of trustees of the National Commission for Children's Television is made up of well-regarded, truly grassfield thinkers and doers whose hearts have been proven to be in the right place. (Nasir Meg Cruz Hand, Dr. Ma. Lourdes Cuyandong, Fr. Cristino Labo Shanti, professor Carlos Nuno and Dr. Luis D'Guimaras).

Indeed, the task assigned to the NCCT is no large and difficult that only the best minds and hearts can effect the major changes needed. But, if it succeeds in its bear on what our young viewers need and deserve, and keeps listening to their opinions in that regard, it has a better chance of succeeding where many others have failed.

HATOK. Everybody needs to work much harder.

Dustin Hoffman makes directing debut at 74

HOFFMAN, Helen "Quartet."

LOS ANGELES—At 74, Dustin Hoffman finally fulfills his dream to direct. The actor, winner of a couple of Oscars and several Golden Globes, makes his directorial debut in "Quartet."

"Do you want the psychoanalytical answer?," Hoffman quipped when asked why it took many decades before he sat on the director's chair. The material that he chose for his first stab at being behind the camera seems to resonate strongly with him. It is Ronald Harwood's screenplay adaptation of his own play of the same name, "Quartet."

The award-winning writer of such films as "The Pianist," "The Dresser" and "The Ghost Writer" wrote the play after watching "Tosca's Kiss," a documentary on Casa Verdi, a retirement home for opera singers in Milan.

Dustin's "psychoanalytical" explanation had to do with his father, Harry. "My father was a prop designer and assistant set designer for Columbia Pictures," he began in his trademark casual voice. "I remember his stories all through growing up, that his lunch breaks were spent watching Frank Capra films. He wanted to be Capra—but, he never got past being a prop man. He was terrified before I was born in the 1930s. Like in 'Death of a Salesman,' he became a salesman—he was selling furniture and Diamond Mattresses."

Dream

"Somewhere in there, I didn't want to accept my father, but I didn't know that then," Dustin said. "It took a lifetime to figure that out. It was OK to be an actor, but don't take away my father's dream. Or be a director."

Now that he made the jump, Dustin said, "it was a wonderful experience. We're calling it (the film) none." He shared his screenwriter's passion for "Tosca's Kiss," the documentary directed by Daniel Schmid which inspired "Quartet."

"It's extraordinary," Dustin said. "I know nothing about opera, but the documentary is about Verdi, the great opera composer who was very wealthy. He built a mansion shortly before he died in Milan, Italy. Like most artists who weren't content with their work, Verdi said that designing his mansion was the best thing he has ever done. He said that, when he dies, he wanted the opera singers to use the mansion as their retirement home."

Opera singers

"That was because opera singers unfortunately join a community of artists who are at their peak, living at 1.4 beats and all that, then 20 years later, they're totally forgotten, and without any funds! In this day, opera singers live in the house of Verdi in Milan. Itself."

Dustin explained that Ronald Harwood turned the story "from Italy to outside of London. The main setting is Bentham House, which was named for Sir Thomas Beecham, who was an opera conductor. It's about retired opera singers and musicians who were great in their day are now displaced and can only live in a retirement home. Great British actors, Maggie Smith, Billy Connolly, Billy Connolly, Pauline Collins and Michael Gambon, play opera singers. The other characters in the movie are real opera singers and musicians who are retired."

"Dame Gwyneth Jones is in it, too," Dustin said of the legendary Welsh soprano. "I've learned that since I took on the project, that she was one of the great opera singers. If you Google her, you will see her dressed in leather and hitting notes like you can't think an possible! That's the fabric of the movie."

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Robert T. Nebeles

My love-hate 'relationship' with the Oscars

By Bebot Carvajosa

TUNING IN to the Oscars® on radio used to be an annual tradition among our gang, made up of Jerboo and Jocosa Cansino, Lito Atienza and me.

We would listen to the Academy Awards aired via Clark Field's radio station. The Cantoso family—as Lumanog's band is commonly but couldn't as to listen to the Oscars live. Thereafter, we would rush to UP to announce the winners.

We would congregate in the Cantoso brothers' room early in the morning of the Oscars; I would come from our home in Pasay City and Lito came from his apartment in Malibunan.

It was in the same room where we used to listen to recorded versions of Shakespearean plays performed by the formidable likes of Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, Sybil Thorndike and Vivien Leigh.

The pomp and glamour of the Oscars excited us. At the time, "Gone with the Wind" premiered here was Bob Hope, who combined wit and Hollywood lore. I remember thrilling to the nominees, like Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh, and directors like Elia Kazan. We were also drawn to European actors like Maria Schell, Simone Signoret and Irene Papas.

But, it was also in that bedroom where I last hate in the UK entertainment industry's taste: I couldn't imagine how a no-talent mind star like Judy Garland in "A Star is Born" could possibly lose to a dressed-down Grace Kelly in "Country Girl."

We cheered when Italian Sophia Loren as the best actor trophy for "Lilies of the Field." Before him, "only" a Best Supporting hattie to earn the Academy trophy was handed to an African-American: Hattie McDaniel for "Gone With The Wind."

Of course, as years passed, we learned more about the politics involved in choosing the Academy's winners—which further dimmed our interest in it. I miss those days when I accepted everything about the Oscars. Those golden statuettes represented magic, with winners who fully deserved them!

Then, we lost confidence even in the hosts. Only "host guy" Billy Crystal has approximated the love Bope earned throughout the many years he hosted the awards.

HOPE. Combined wit and Hollywood lore.

Sneak peeks

By Hector U. Tory

OOO: Of the most-cured new movies to be announced this season is 'Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter.' The title alone is a bite of an action-packed thriller! It bears the "secret life" of historically petulant president—how his mother was killed by a supernatural creature, thus fueling his passion to crush vampires and their slave-owning helpers!

'Prometheus'

Ridley Scott's latest 3D vision of the future exploits Michael Fassbender and Charlize Theron and takes its visionary characters to the most dangerous parts of the universe, where they must fight a terrifying battle to save the human race.

'The Muppets'

The new Muppets movie introduces a new character, Walter, who loves them so much that he ends at nothing to help Kermit get the gang back together to save Muppet Studios!

'The Lucky One'

Zac Efron's latest starrer is a drama in which he plays a Marine sergeant who returns from his third tour of duty in Iraq with the aim of reuniting with the woman he met during his previous tour.

'The Campaign'

Will Ferrell and Zach Galifianakis play competing candidates in a no-holds-barred race for Congress in Jay Roach's latest comedy.

'The Lone Ranger'

Native American spirit warrior, Tonto (Johnny Depp), puts a new spin on the old cowboy yarn as he recounts the tales that transformed John Reid (Armie Hammer) from a man of the law into a legend of justice, taking viewers on a runaway train of epic suspense and humor—one horse!

'Wrath of the Titans'

Sam Worthington reprises the character of Perseus in a 3D action-adventure that brings the battle back to the mythical land of gods and monsters, culminating in a fight of extraordinary proportions.

'Marvel's The Avengers'

An unexpected enemy threatens global safety and survival, so iconic

DEPP. Portrays The Lone Ranger's Native American spirit warrior.

of superheroes has to be created to pull the world back from the brink of disaster. The super team includes Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Captain America (Chris Evans), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), The Hulk (Mark Ruffalo), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner) and Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson).

'The Three Stooges'

The Farrelly Brothers' new take on the old comedic screen trio has them getting their start in life as orphans raised by nuns. Much later, the orphanage is about to be shut down, as the three grateful "graduates" raise funds to save it—the only way they know how. Curious guest stars are contributed by the antic likes of Sofia Vergara and Jane Lynch.

The journey ahead

WISE STUDENTS profess, so wish their well and try to interest more good scholars for their further journeys in life. These thirteen proverbs can guide them as they embark on new adventure:

■ Teachers open the door. You enter by yourself.

■ A man of worth is given without pride; a mean man is proud without being given.

Good fortune

■ Good fortune is a benefit for the wise, but a curse for the foolish.

■ A mature mind accepts suggestions.

■ By nature, all men are alike—but, they're set apart by education.

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bisnard

■ A wise man adapts to circumstances, as water shapes itself to the vessel that contains it.

■ Worldly fame and pleasure are destructive to the virtues of the mind; anxious thoughts and apprehensions are injurious to our health.

■ Do not examine any view as trivial, and therefore practice it, do not consider any virtue as unimportant, and therefore neglect it.

■ A wise man studies his own devotions, as ignorant man listens to public opinion.

■ If your strength is small, don't carry heavy burdens. If your words are worthless, don't dispense advice.

'Project Runway Philippines' premieres tomorrow on ETC

By Edmund L. Bloom

AFTER A nationwide audition that attracted more than a hundred hopefuls, the field is down to 10 fashion designers who will contest the top spot on "Project Runway Philippines."

The reality show premieres tomorrow at 8 p.m. on ETC (Channel 9 on free TV, 14 on Sky and Destiny). There have still not decided by a panel of judges headed by Inna Lorel and Apples Abrera, with Jojie Lloren as mentor.

Decision

Each week a guest judge will join Inna and Apples to render the decision. For the first show, Inna Lorel will be the third judge, flouting the show's supermodel and fashion expression, Sweetie de Leon-Gonzalez.

The 10 finalists come from all over the country and from different backgrounds. There's an ex-seminarian, a blindfan, a visually impaired individual, a former banker, a Physics major, and a call center agent.

FROM LEFT: Raja Laurel, Ryanlee Rivera, Sweetie de Leon-Gonzalez and Jojie Lloren

Normanie Santos, 26, is the ex-seminarian. After a few years inside, he realized that he didn't want to be

Regents Tower Greenbelt Theatres Robinsons Galleria Robinsons Cinemas
Shangri-La Plaza Cinema 10 Ayala Cinemas 4
PLATINUM CINEMA
HUNGER GAMES (2D/3D) 3:00 6:00 9:00
HUNGER GAMES (In Digital) 11:00, 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
HUNGER GAMES 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
HUNGER GAMES 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
JOHN CARTER 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
JOHN CARTER 11:30, 2:30, 5:30, 8:30
THE MUPPETS (2D) 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45
THE MUPPETS 10:00, 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
LOREAX 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
THE MUPPETS 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
MIRROR, MIRROR 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
MIRROR, MIRROR 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE 3D
facebook/twitter
EXTREME TRANSFORMATION
BIG SHOWS at the BIG DOME
WATCH IT LIVE!
Mar 23 Boyz Vadiez, Pops Fernandez & Rich Lebrocio
Mar 30 Hamish
Mar 31 Sheila Newton Jolas
Apr 6 The Cocoteenies
Apr 13 LMFAO
Apr 12 Skyfreedom
Apr 13 Ms. Philippines Grand Coronation Night
BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW! CALL TICKETNET AT 911.5555

SATURDAY Special

NOW SHOWING

'Hunger Games' film franchise gets off to a thrilling start

STORY ON PAGE G4

Put an end to bill nightmares with the Sun anti-bill shockplans

Businesses are not always happy as there are some kinds of surprises that you welcome happiness. Take for instance those seemingly weightless mails like billing statements. Some people have experienced the most shocking moments of their lives upon reading total amount due.

Freelancing was how Cassandra Perez, a work-from-home mom, described the day she received an unusually large bill for her utilities. "I had to add a part of my grocery budget just to settle that bill," she remarks.

For single-parent employee Bre Jeff, 40, various bills diligently saves for his kids' school fees, unexpected increases in expenses were disappointing. "We don't get any advice there will be an increase in the tuition fee. It was a 20-percent increment and it was a relief."

Meanwhile, car owners can relate to the experience of Michelle Rafaela, a manager for an outsourcing company. Tessa had a shocked when her car insurance agent gave us the computation for a comprehensive insurance. Good thing they attributed us to pay in six monthly installments. Still, we need to pay almost the same amount each year.

Imagine getting billed over P10,000 for a month's mobile phone usage. "It was a dreadful moment because for many years I was only paying a monthly subscription fee, then all of a sudden and in just one month the figures surprisingly multiplied," said housewife Richie Dela. After this, she switched to prepaid service.

Painstakingly budgeting for her salary and daily needs, single student Angela Herrera is shocked at the exorbitant prices of commodities and services. "When I go to the bookstore to buy materials for projects or books, I would hesitate what I want. After I eat, I realize most expensive meals food chains offer are actually no longer 'value for money' offerings."

For those who find their monthly bills regularly going up, there are some ways, pointed out as a caution in case of proper bills. For instance, there are monetized hours of phone or Internet usage that go beyond limit. Whatever the case, there is a need to protect one's self from these unwanted bills.

Good thing there's Sun Cellular's Sun Anti-Shock Go! Plans (ASG) comprised of three unbeatable postpaid offerings. Each plan starts with affordable monthly subscription fee packed with one of Sun's "Unlimited" features. These plans come with the "anti-shock cap," which sets a fixed monthly fee for those who have exceeded their allotted subscription.

For Internet users, there's the Sun Anti-Bill Shock Data Plan. Enjoy 60 hours of broadband Internet use with up to 3.6 Mbps speed for only P399 a month and a measly P10 per additional hour in a fixed minimum usage limit of P999 upon exceeding 126 hours or more. Or, for Internet on your mobile, enjoy 20 hours for only P149 a month, while having that peace of mind not to pay over P500 in excessive surfing.

For many texters, the Sun Anti-Bill Shock Text All Plan is heaven-sent with 1,000 SMS to other networks by simply sending P199 per month to their existing number. The price is the winner with the convenience of using only your Sun SIM to text any network at only 20 cents per SMS sent. Exceeding the monthly SMS limit is also no worry with its fixed add-on rate of only P1.60.

Landline phone subscribers save more and enjoy more landline access with Sun Anti-Bill Shock Mobile Landline Plan. Enjoy unlimited local landline calls for only P199/per month.

Those tall mothers give total subscriber protection from optimum usage to worry-free payments – a real Anti-Shock combination that every postpaid subscriber needs for their peace of mind. With these choices and irresistible features, there's surely a Sun Anti-Bill Shock plan for everyone.

Want to know more about the SUN ABS Plans? Visit The Sun Shop outlets located nationwide or call Sun's Hotline 333 in 1622 using your Sun-powered mobile phone or (02) 990-3333 or (02) 845-6000 from any landline phone. Better yet, log on to www.sunbroadband.com.ph, visit Sun Facebook page www.facebook.com/sunbroadband and follow Sun Cellular on Twitter via www.twitter.com/sunbroadband.

Katherine Heigl freshens up her act

By Nestor U. Torre

KATHERINE HEIGL'S latest movie, "One for the Money" is a departure from her glitzy rom-coms. She deglamorizes herself to play a young woman who's so strapped for cash that she takes on the most unconventional job of a reckless arrest bail criminal manhunter.

At last look, Heigl would have it, however, the runaway she's so signed in track down is her former boyfriend, a cop who's unjustly accused of murder. She presents his innocence, but he has a tough time getting the proof he needs, because his potential witnesses keep getting bumped off.

Although the film can best be described as an action-comedy, the last find in many of its supporting actors are that as blown up or otherwise disposed of, occasionally gives the viewer pause and makes him relate to in more serious way.

Heigl herself is ruthlessly challenged by the character arc that her role describes. Stole a raw recruit to a tough sharp-shooter who's even able to save the runaway cop from certain death.

Unusual requirements

In the process, she figures in scenes she's never done before, like getting handcuffed to a shower rod without any clothes on, figuring in numerous shootouts, stealing a car, wading through the smelly contents of a dumpster to find her car keys, etc. All those unusual requirements may have taken a toll on her glamorous proportion, but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

After all she's been a TV/film star for over a decade now, and could be getting rob and rating as a result of all that success. Playing radically against type could be just what the career doctor—and doctor—ordered to shake things up and freshen up her act again.

Aside from Heigl, the actor who plays the cop on the run, James O'Mara, comes on strong by way of the bright wattage and charisma he has in frankly heaps, as we should be seeing more of him on the big screen soon.

Unexpected treat

For "scatter" viewers, the movie has an unexpected treat in store—the supporting performance of Debbie Reynolds as Heigl's feisty and trouble-prone grandmother. Reynolds, and given many scenes to make her death, but she takes full advantage of the limited time she has onscreen. —"Even a time-tested trooper to make the most of a less than terrific opportunity to remind viewers of her stellar qualities.

Let's hope that Heigl was paying attention, because she could pick up a tip or two from Reynolds' exciting example about how to remain viewers' interest after many years of stardom. Reynolds may look her age, but the joy of performance hasn't faded, and neither has her desire to entertain, even if only in a supporting role.

If Heigl follows her example and keeps "reinventing" herself now and then, she should be around for a really long time.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 THE MUPPETS (3D) 12:00, 3:20, 6:40, 7:40, 9:00
2 THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 1:40, 3:50, 6:30, 9:10 PG-13
3 THE HUNGER GAMES 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30 PG-13
4 DR. SEUSS' THE LORAX / THE HUNGER GAMES 7:00, 9:50

JAZZ RHYTHMS
JAZZ ON KEYS
JAZZ SOLO

POWER PLANT CINEMA

MIRROR MIRROR / THE HUNGER GAMES - DIGITAL / THE HUNGER GAMES - PG13
12:30, 3:00, 6:00, 8:30 | 1:10, 4:00, 7:00, 9:00

DR. SEUSS' THE LORAX / THE HUNGER GAMES - DIGITAL / THE MUPPETS IN 3D / MIRROR MIRROR - RECEIVER
12:45, 3:40, 6:35, 7:30, 10:25 | 12:20, 2:55, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30 | 12:40, 3:30, 6:30, 9:25

MOVIE TIME

GLORIETTA 2
1: THE MUPPETS (3D) 12:00, 3:20, 10:10 AM
2: THE HUNGER GAMES 1:40, 3:50, 6:30, 9:10 PM
3: THE HUNGER GAMES 11:50 AM, 7:00, 10:00 PM
4: CORAZON: ANG UNANG AWANG 12:00, 2:00, 4:10, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00 PM
5: THE LORAX / JOHN CARTER 12:00, 1:30, 3:00, 4:30, 6:00, 7:30, 9:00, 10:30 PM
6: THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 1:40, 4:40, 7:30, 10:30 PM
7: MIRROR, MIRROR 1:10, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:30 PM

GREENBELT 1
1: MIRROR, MIRROR 12:00, 2:10, 4:20, 7:40 PM
2: THE HUNGER GAMES 12:15, 3:10, 6:10, 9:10 PM

GREENBELT 2
1: THE HUNGER GAMES 1:00, 4:00, 6:50, 10:00 PM
2: THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00 PM
3: THE LORAX / MIRROR, MIRROR 1:30, 4:40, 6:40, 9:30, 11:00 PM
4: THE MUPPETS (2D) 1:20, 3:40, 6:05, 8:15, 10:40 PM
5: THE HUNGER GAMES 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00 PM

MARQUEE MALL
1: THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 12:00, 3:20, 6:40, 10:00 AM
2: THE HUNGER GAMES 1:40, 4:40, 7:30, 10:30 PM
3: THE MUPPETS (3D) 1:00, 3:00, 7:00, 9:00 PM
4: THE LORAX, MIRROR, MIRROR 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00 PM
5: THE HUNGER GAMES 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45 PM

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1: THE HUNGER GAMES 1:40, 4:40, 7:30, 10:30 PM
2: THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00 PM
3: THE MUPPETS (3D) 1:00, 3:00, 7:00, 9:00 PM
4: THE LORAX, MIRROR, MIRROR 2:10, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00 PM
5: THE HUNGER GAMES 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45 PM

AYALA CENTER CEBU
1: THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 1:00, 3:20, 6:10, 9:50 PM
2: THE HUNGER GAMES 12:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:40 PM
3: THE MUPPETS (3D) 12:00, 2:10, 4:00, 6:00, 8:10 PM
4: MIRROR, MIRROR 1:00, 3:10, 5:10, 7:20, 9:20 PM

MARIKINA
1: THE HUNGER GAMES 11:15, 2:15, 5:15, 8:15 PM
2: THE MUPPETS (3D) 11:45, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45 PM
3: MIRROR, MIRROR 12:45, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45 PM
4: THE HUNGER GAMES 12:15, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15 PM

MARKET! MARKET!
1: THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 12:00, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00 PM
2: MIRROR, MIRROR 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 PM
3: THE LORAX (3D) 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 7:50, 9:50 PM
4: THE MUPPETS (3D) 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:00 PM
5: THE HUNGER GAMES 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45 PM
6: CORAZON: ANG UNANG AWANG 11:40, 1:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00 PM
7: JOHN CARTER 12:45, 3:30, 6:15, 9:00 PM

TRINOMA
1: THE LORAX / JOHN CARTER 11:10, 1:05, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 PM
2: THE HUNGER GAMES 12:00, 3:00, 6:30, 7:40, 10:00 PM
3: THE MUPPETS (3D) 12:00, 3:00, 6:30, 7:40, 10:00 PM
4: THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 11:10, 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30 PM
5: CORAZON: ANG UNANG AWANG 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00 PM
6: MIRROR, MIRROR 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 PM
7: THE HUNGER GAMES 1:00, 4:00, 7:10, 10:40 PM

ABREEZA
1: THE MUPPETS (3D) 12:00, 2:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:10 PM
2: THE HUNGER GAMES (3D) 1:00, 3:50, 6:00, 8:00 PM
3: THE HUNGER GAMES 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:40 PM
4: MIRROR, MIRROR 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40 PM

For ticket reservations or purchases, txt SureSeats to 2910 (for Globe and Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com
Movie schedules may change without prior notice.
For verification, please call 729-7777.
*Reservations open to all SureSeats users. Purchases open for all Pass cardholders only.

MOVIE SPECIAL

LOVE to WATCH!

MALL EVENTS

GLORIETTA
GREENBELT
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
MARKET! MARKET!
TRINOMA
BONIFACIO HIGH STREET
AYALA CENTER CEBU
MARQUEE
ABREEZA

MALL SPECIAL

GLORIETTA LIVE!
BRISNY & BRENDA AND THE LAMARS
MARCH 24 • 1PM • GLORIETTA 3 ATRIUM

glorietta | Greenbelt | Trinoma | Ayala Center Cebu | Marquee | Bonifacio High Street | Tri-Noma | MARQUEE | Abreezo

Visit www.ayalamalls.com.ph or text AYALA MALLS to 2548

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPPH BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BAABY BY PH_LEDGER

DICK TRACY BY JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS

LOVE-MOTS BY ELIZABETH HOROWITZ

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

RIKO MACHINE BY FRANK ABRERA

SEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

NUTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY

DUSTIN BY STEVE KELLEY AND JEFF PARKER

TOLDJA BY MARK COLL

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You set ambitious today and because of this, startling self-knowledge. You're probably set on achieving many goals around you now!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) A major, closely held thought matter can be revealed today. This would be due to surprising news from someone out of the blue or events that are outside anyone's control.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Many kinds of group meeting will be set in motion today. You could even experience personal, or someone you closely know, might do something that's quite bizarre. Who knows?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Many kinds of people, parties and activities figure high for you today. You might be tempted to do this.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Creative opportunities, in many ways, may be open for you today. Work hard, learn well and be willing to take risks. Remember, however, to avoid pitfalls and acting impulsively or in the spirit of competition.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Many ideas have been percolating in you recently and today you have the opportunity to put them to use. Work hard, keep in touch with your heart concerns and you should do well without trouble.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Partners and friends are possible allies today. You definitely will be benefiting from talking over all plans. Be mindful of your own financial needs and limits.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Your career and work are possibly shifted today. You definitely will be benefiting from talking over all plans. Be mindful of your own financial needs and limits.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) This is an excellent period for you today. Whatever is most important to you is highlighted. Be mindful of your own financial needs and limits.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Unexpected company might arrive today. Whatever is most important to you is highlighted. Be mindful of your own financial needs and limits. Work probably not out of something in the kitchen today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You do not realize it, but you are in a very good position to get ahead. Be mindful of your own financial needs and limits. Work probably not out of something in the kitchen today.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Many close ties and open horizons are highlighted today. Whatever is most important to you is highlighted. Be mindful of your own financial needs and limits.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

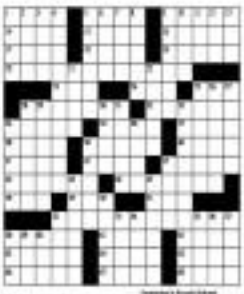
Fill the grid so that each row, column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs or www.sudoku.com

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

		1				3		
9								2
8	4			2			7	1
			7		3			
		4		5		8		
			8		2			
5	2			7			6	4
4								3
		6				9		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Growing pains on 'Sarah G. Live'

By Nestor U. Torre

THE FIRST telecast of Sarah Geronimo's new TV show, "Sarah G. Live," began auspiciously with an all-out, show-biz-type production number that showcased the popular star's singing and dancing skills live—and has more young-adult projection.

Later, however, for the requisite "feng sahuy," it showed Sarah on a youth with her current rumored squeeze, Gerald Anderson, as Sarah's sweet heart is giggly teen mode. —One step forward, one step back?

Again, to please the fans, Sarah had to go on brisk singing mode, with predictably "ear-cleaning" melody.

All told, however, the new show could make it easier for Sarah's fans to develop, grow and mature as much as the young-adult star obviously seems to.

At 25, it must be a bit discombobulating for Sarah to have to be all perky, frisky, feisty and flirty, like she's been doing for the past five years. But, old habits—and "fans" preferences—die hard.

Were there telltale, honest, at, an unwavering pattern of complaint has begun to emerge on Sarah's new musical-variety show: The ambitious production is trying to present its young host already veteran star in a new light, as a versatile young adult performer?

That's an ambitious agenda, but we wish the program and its star well, because the growing-up is long overdue. However, the "make-over" Sarah's season is more than just a matter of exchanging her current wardrobe during her musical segments and wardrobe, and "making up" her image. It has to help Sarah "fill in the blanks" in terms of all of the time she spent working rather than going to school and living.

She had the best and most artistic intentions in doing so, but it's left her not as mature and "life-experienced" as her young adult contemporaries, and that "gap" has made her a skittish performer who tries to get by with superficial approximations rather than real substance and insight in performance.

There's no doubt that Sarah is trying to fill in those blanks, but she's not quite there yet. One of her awkward gaps is her effortful approach to comedy in the first two editions of her show, the ones made to do cut-up comedy with experienced comics, and she came off as "TSC."

GERONIMO: Old habits—and fans' preferences—die hard.

SpotLight

Interestingly enough, in her third show, she wasn't made to do any actual comedy herself, but was relegated to merely reacting to the antics of other guy comedians. That may have taken the spotlight away from her, but until she really learns how to tickle viewers' funnybones, that may be the wisest tack to take.

The "Sarah G. Live" show's lead as her comedic chops, so she should go on clowning it. But, she shouldn't be made to compete or keep up with the fans in the business, as she's sometimes being required to do, because it's unfair to her.

The latest move would be to either tone down her star-gestures' zaniness, or make her do solo duets—one another to the duets—and if only a host necessities is left standing?

The script quickly establishes that Livermore's character is an

REPRISE! book highlights his delightful encounters with film, music and TV icons.

'Hollywood's Filipino connection'

ANGEL PUBLISHING, in cooperation with Powerbooks and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, will launch "My Filipino Connection: The Philippines in Hollywood" by US-based journalist and author Rolando Solomon, Ruben V. Nepales, on April 18, 3:30 p.m. at Powerbooks Greenhills 4 in Mahal City.

Collection

The book is a collection of delightful interviews with talents of Filipino heritage who are making a name in the US entertainment industry.

Nepales is no stranger to Hollywood connections and histories. Through his columns, he gives Filipinos the visual, no thrill of meeting and interviewing with many film, music and TV icons. In all his encounters with international celebrities, he can usually strike a chord with the Filipino connection, be it news or reference to anything Filipino.

The book features interviews with Fil-Ams and Pinoys who have successfully carved memorable niches in the industry, like Vanessa Hudgens, Charice Pempengco, Darren Criss, Cheryl Rondstrom, Eric Stonestreet and Matthew Gilsinger, Tony DeLuliis, Alec Mapa, Rosanna Roces, Bernardo and Sarah Maria Bercede Fagin.

NOW SHOWING

'Hunger Games' film franchise gets off to a thrilling start

By Rito P. delos

THE YOUNG protagonists of Suzy Bear' riveting sci-fi jaunt-ride, "The Hunger Games," may not have followed Collins's one-dead feat, Jacob Black's six-pack, or Bella Swan's damsel-in-distress appeal—but, Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence), Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson) and Gale Hawthorne (Liam Hemsworth) don't need to take their child-off or blood exclusively to keep viewers on the edge of their seats!

The jump from page to screen has been the year's most anticipated pop-culture event, and director-scribed Suzanne Collins' edgy young-adult novels, which follow teenagers who negotiate romantic woes as they fight for survival in a dystopic, post-apocalypse world ruled by underground oligarchs with a determined craving for violence, manipulation and the feel-and-play over indulgence of reality TV.

Into the fire's den

Sixteen-year-old Katniss has been thrust into the hosts den after she volunteers to take the place of her younger sister, whose name has been unexpectedly drawn in a raffle to pick a boy and a girl, between ages 12 to 18, from each of the ruling Capitol's 12 districts.

The 24th annual competition pits The Hunger Games—an annual "punishment" that serves as a reminder of the now dwelling rebellion 74 years ago. But, the competition they're thrust into isn't just a high-stakes game. They must

LAWRENCE AND HEMSWORTH. Figure in building, dress may forbade.

fight one another to the death—and only a lone survivor is left standing!

The script quickly establishes that Livermore's character is an

orphaned in distress who requires a dashing prince to save her. Without and prone to hasty (and inane) decisions, he hasn't the strength of character embodied in Sanja by the Oscar-nominated actress of "Winter's Bone." She is the fact that keeps this modern fairy tale's center rotating.

Humor

True, given its gloomy and cautionary premise, it's impossible to tell "The Hunger Games" tale without violence. But, Suzy' treatment is never gratuitous—in fact, it's full of humanity, irony and, yes, even humor.

In fact, there flats the thrilling action that takes place concurrent, it's the meaningful relationships Katniss forges with the other characters that keep moviegoers glued to their seats. The production's concept centers ground, but its actors manage to make their stories believable and empathetic. Would that other sci-fi flicks could be so riveting and relevant.

In "Resident's latest blockbuster franchise, the audience doesn't just find a strong heroine to root for—they get a heroine with a sense of humanity, a beating heart with the drive to survive. Hemsworth? Let the screaming—and swooning—begin!

Summer sparklers at Mr. C's music school

CATHERINE Ewering classes.

TWO SUMMER, The Music School of Peter Cayabyab offers Manhattanhattan classes for ages 4-7, and 100 for ages 8-12 years old. And, for talents ages 14-20 years old, fulfill that dream of being able to sing, dance and act by way of the new talent school, The Voice Singapore! Call 632-6868 or 897-8351-6333.

World-Famous Platters at Alex Theater

MONTAGE The World Famous Platters of Monrovia, Missouri with hits tunes at Alex Theater on March 19. The group is composed of multilateral artists, Dee Dee Hamilton, Eddie Wood, Willie Hall and Lawrence "The Booster" Randall, who sell out hits Smoke Platters sing like "Only You," "Twilight Time," "The Great Pretender" and "My Prayer."

Cecile Licad at Island Cove

Tomorrow at 8 p.m., acclaimed pianist, Cecil Licad, performs concertinos by Chopin and Liszt. Before the main recital, guests can enjoy themselves at the Cousins Water Park, Bintod Island and Kidney Village. Call 749-4161.

Bulgogi Brothers at Alabang Town Center

Bulgogi Brothers has opened at the Lower ground floor of The Garden of Alabang Town Center. Enjoy Bing-a-Korean—from the authentic food, music, shows on the TV monitors, and the contemporary Korean ambience and decor. Partake of Bulgogi prime cuts of beef, pork and chicken to experience that authentic Bbq flavor, as well as many other exciting Korean dishes.

Bubble Nail Care

Make your nails look gorgeous this summer with Bubble, a quality brand of nail polishes and nail-care tools, including bubble Celeste Dr. and Nail Hardener Kit. Bubble sets more than 70 fashion nail polish colors, including attachment grabbing colors like Smashing Red, Smashing Violet and Smashing Black.

Movies on TV

Go HBO today at 8 p.m., "Glass." Tomorrow at 7:45 p.m., "The Tal Wilkinson. Friday, March 25 at 10:45 p.m., "Four Girl." March 27 at 1 a.m., "Fido." March 28 at 8 a.m., "Good Will Hunting." March 29 at noon, "Angel Witchgirlfriend." March 30 at noon, "Apollo 13." On Cinemax today at 8 p.m., "Blown Away." Tomorrow at 11:35 p.m., "The Final Destination." March 26 at 8 p.m., "Turmoil in Berlin." March 27 at 4 p.m., "Cops Four." March 28 at 11:30 p.m., "Hercules." March 29 at 6:30 p.m., "Charade." March 30 at 6:30 p.m., "Andromeda."

IFC Creative Film Camp

The Philippine Independent Filmmakers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (IFC) is offering its Creative Film Camp from April 18 to 29 at Fully Booked, Bonifacio High Street, Taguig City.

Scriptwriting will be taught by Jun Dy del Rosario; Film Literacy by various experts; Directing by Wenn Deramas; Producing and Marketing by Raymond Lee; Cinematography by Conrad "Monster" Jimenez; and Animation by Ramon del Prado of Studio Amihan Studio. Call 09151018 8880 (Dy) or 0922 292-5761 (Deramas) or e-mail valentino.cruz@gmail.com.

Jiro Manio deserves a second chance

FANS' DAY

By Andy Bati

CARL BENITEZ, student "Never mind former child actor Jiro Manio's impending release from a drug rehabilitation center is a welcome development for the former child actor, who was unfortunately in the award-winning film, "Magkaribal Ka Ng Lahat," which he starred in, at the age of 10.

Oliver views.

Pinky Rosario, television/ "Anybody Pangilinan has viewed over Rosario's acting, Sadly however, she isn't successful in her role as the villainess on GMA 7's late-afternoon soap, "Love Her Not." She should show more subtlety and restraint and discard her cardboard and "imitating style of portrayal."

BOTTO. Should give TV hosting another chance.

Glen Acapon, student: "Sana Gerry Ramos is an insane hosting and with a bit more affluent and sooner. She's attached to mean the concert in Cebu and the Middle East Dino ovrin, Sana has been the subject of unpleasant remarks, because she is not, by her own admission, a singer.

Determination

"But, we should give her credit for her strong determination to fulfill her dream of becoming a concert artist. Not many can do that, despite all the

Annet's handicap. If this is the case, she has been quoted as saying that she'll "retire" from singing after her concert on this is over."

Len Zamora, office employee: "At

Some's decision to resign from hosting "Pasasalamat" to attend to family matters will surely endear her to her followers. All has been successful in keeping the feeling of loyalty and physical observation on the show down to a minimum. We hope that, in time, she will have a change of heart and give TV hosting another chance?"

Nadia Arcinas, graphic designer: "Local TV news reporters should learn proper phrasing when using Filipino. They often stop halfway through a sentence, like there's a period—only in commas the rest of it. They also mispronounce some Filipino verbs. Interpreting what verbs in our language may be pronounced differently when they aren't used as nouns."

E-mail bataandy@yahoo.com

Memorable 'Visita'

LAST WEDNESDAY, TV-turner Elgin attended an Philippine Airlines embarked on a seven-church Visita Iglesia, organized by Christy Romero Alcala, Cecile Lacson and Mod Mendoza. We began the first two readings at the 400-year-old Immaculate Conception church in Los Baños, Laguna, that has been turned into a shrine.

At UPLB's St. Therese Chapel, we did the third and fourth readings using the reflections and prayers of Sorsogon Bishop Jesse Mercado. Then visited the parish church of San Pedro Labrador in Calauan, after which we had lunch. We proceeded to Tanauan, where church is made up of red bricks. We sang our prayers at the chapel of the multi-grounded community.

Prayers

We also visited the St. John the Baptist Church in Lilio. We held hands as we sang our prayers. We had a wonderful ride to Majayjay as we enjoyed the lush foliage on both sides of the road. The St. Gregory the Great Church, built centuries ago, has a breath-taking facade.

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

One seventh church was the Our Lady of Guadalupe in Pagsanjan. Our experience was heightened when a guide took us to another chamber that housed an altar of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Her statue is surmounted by a canopy and grandeur.

At Christmas, we find hope in Christ's sacrifice as we connect to His love during the Lenten season. During the Stations of the Cross, Christ was at peace in the midst of suffering—as those who would follow Him can also find peace. His enduring love brings hope for all of us.

Join our Barrows Photo Safari from April to June. Visit mandy-navasero.blogspot.com, or call 894-2268.

AT Lilio church, built in 1853.